Heirs of the Apostles

Arabic Christianity: Texts and Studies

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Sidney H. Griffith

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Heirs of the Apostles

Studies on Arabic Christianity in Honor of Sidney H. Griffith

Edited by

David Bertaina
Sandra Toenies Keating
Mark N. Swanson
Alexander Treiger

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Contents

Preface xi
Abbreviations xiii
Notes on Contributors xiv

PART 1
Arabic Language, Bible, and Qur'ān

1 An Arabic Christian Perspective on Monotheism in the Qur'ān: Elias of Nisibis' *Kitāb al-Majālis* 3
David Bertaina

2 From Multiplicity to Unification of the Arabic Biblical Text: a Reading of the Rūm Orthodox Projects for the Arabization and Printing of the Gospels during the Ottoman Period 22
Elie Dannaoui

3 Early Christian Arabic Translation Strategies (Matthew 11:20–30 in Codex Vat. Ar. 13) 37
Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala

4 Flawed Biblical Translations into Arabic and How to Correct Them: a Copt and a Jew Study Saadiah's *Tafsīr* 56
Ronny Vollandt

5 The Utility of Christian Arabic Texts for Qur'ānic Studies 93
Clare Wilde

PART 2
Arabic Christian Responses to Islam and Muslim Interpretations of Christianity

6 Apocalyptic Ecclesiology in Response to Early Islam 115
Cornelia B. Horn

7 The Rationality of Christian Doctrine: Abū Rāʾiṭa al-Takrītī's Philosophical Response to Islam 157
Sandra Toenies Keating

8 The Doctrine of the Incarnation in Dialogue with Islam: Four Lines of Argumentation 179
Thomas W. Ricks

9 Muslim Views of the Cross as a Symbol of the Christian Faith 194
Shawqi Talia

10 The Doctrine of the Trinity in Early Islam: Misperceptions and Misrepresentations 214
David Thomas

PART 3
Arabic Christianity in the Medieval Islamic World

11 Byzantine Monasticism and the Holy Land: Palestine in Byzantine Hagiography of the 11th and 12th Centuries 231
Johannes Pahlitzsch

12 Inquiring of "Beelzebub": Timothy and al-Jāḥiẓ on Christians in the ʿAbbāsid Legal System 256
Andrew Platt and Nathan P. Gibson

13 The Church and the Mosque in Wisdom's Shade: on the Story of "Alexander and the Hermit Prince" 284
Mark N. Swanson

14 Revisiting Cheikho's Assessment of Abū Tammām's Christian Origins 310
Jennifer Tobkin

15 Paul of Antioch's *Responses to a Muslim Sheikh* 333
Alexander Treiger

PART 4
Manuscript Discoveries

16 Evagrius Ponticus at the Monastery of the Syrians: Newly Documented Evidence for an Arabic Reception History 349
Stephen J. Davis

17 Christian-Muslim-Jewish Relations in Patristic Literature: the Arabic *Questions and Answers of Basil and Gregory* 395
Barbara Roggema

18 A Fragment of a Christian-Muslim Disputation "in the Style of Abū Rā'iṭa and ʿĪsā ibn Zurʿa" (Gotha ar. 2882, fols. 16r–24v): a Reassessment 415
Harald Suermann

19 A Greco-Arabic Palimpsest from the Sinai New Finds: Some Preliminary Observations 426
Jack Tannous

20 An Arabic Manuscript of the Visions of Anba Shenouda: Edition and Translation 446
Jason R. Zaborowski

Bibliography of Sidney H. Griffith's Publications 495
Index of Biblical and Qur'ānic Citations 518
Index of Names, Subjects, and Terms 521

Preface

It is with a profound sense of gratitude that the students, colleagues, and friends of Fr. Sidney H. Griffith offer this *Festschrift* on the occasion of his 80th birthday. This collection of articles on the Christian Arabic heritage is a small token of appreciation for the gift of his life, faith, and scholarship.

This *Festschrift* honors Fr. Sidney's contribution to Christian Arabic Studies. Fr. Sidney is considered the effective founder of the study of Christian Arabic in the United States, and his work has had a profound impact worldwide. Beginning with his PhD dissertation on the controversial theology of Theodore Abū Qurra (1978), Fr. Sidney has made the world of Syriac and Arabic-speaking Christians of the ʿAbbāsid period and beyond accessible to a wide variety of readers. His knowledge of history and theology, combined with a deep grasp of Syriac and Arabic, has shed a light on the complex changes that took place as Muslim dominance over ancient Christian spaces deepened. Fr. Sidney's generosity, insight, and fairness towards his subjects has fashioned a more complete picture of the multifaceted milieu of the eighth and ninth-century Near East.

Fr. Sidney's accomplishments are myriad, and are certainly not limited to Christian Arabic Studies. In 2011, his colleagues in Syriac language and literature honored him with a *Festschrift* for his 75th birthday: *To Train His Soul in Books: Syriac Asceticism in Early Christianity*, edited by Robin Darling Young and Monica J. Blanchard (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press). *To Train His Soul in Books* includes an excellent overview of Fr. Sidney's life and publications. While it is not necessary for us to repeat this information here, we should note that Fr. Sidney's bibliography has expanded even more in the last few years and is striking in both its breadth and its depth. At the end of the volume we will therefore present a complete (as far as possible) bibliography of Fr. Sidney's publications to-date.

Yet Fr. Sidney has not remained a scholar in an ivory tower. He is a well-known figure in the world of Catholic-Muslim and Catholic-Orthodox dialogue, and he has continually published on these subjects. Fr. Sidney's deep knowledge of history, theology, liturgy, and a multitude of languages are valued in these exchanges. He is frequently called on to give expert advice, particularly with regard to thorny aspects of the relations between Christians and Muslims. Fr. Sidney is also an inveterate defender of Christians in the Middle East, but not at the expense of honesty and generosity towards their Muslim neighbors. Fr. Sidney's contributions are well regarded precisely because of his integrity. His careful analysis of what is known on the subject has helped dialogue part-

ners overcome centuries of misunderstanding, and clarified disagreements, so that new and accurate ways of thinking can be formulated.

Fr. Sidney is best loved as a teacher of many contributors to this volume. Whether one has known him for decades, years, or months, he is always ready to discuss a text, idea, or author over a drink or meal, or while standing in the lobby at a conference. He has guided countless students and colleagues over the past forty years through obscure texts, difficult theological concepts, and intricate historical relationships, and has done so with patience and enthusiasm. Fr. Sidney is one of those rare academics who has been an inspiration for hundreds worldwide, while remaining humble in every way, eager to share his expertise, and accessible to those who seek him out. It is a badge of honor for those of us who have been privileged to sit in the seminar room in the basement of Mullen Library at the Catholic University of America to pore over an Arabic text with him, or to wait in his office while he searches his file cabinets for an article that would be useful for one's thesis. For this we will ever be grateful.

Finally, Fr. Sidney is a deeply devout Roman Catholic priest of the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity. His love for the Christian community is apparent in all that he does and writes. Indeed, many people of the parishes that he has served over the years know him only as a consummate preacher and pastor, not as the renowned scholar that he is.

We, Fr. Sidney's friends, colleagues, and students, offer this *Festschrift* as a small sign of our immense gratitude for the blessing of his faithful, gentle witness to the world.

⁘

It is our great pleasure to thank Maurits van den Boogert and Franca de Kort (Brill) for launching the book series "Arabic Christianity: Texts and Studies" and our colleagues on the editorial board for accepting this *Festschrift* as the first publication in the series.

Abbreviations

ACMP	Sidney H. Griffith, *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth-Century Palestine*. Aldershot and Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1992.
BCTA	Sidney H. Griffith, *The Beginnings of Christian Theology in Arabic: Muslim-Christian Encounters in the Early Islamic Period*. Aldershot: Variorum, 2002.
CMR	*Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*. 11 volumes to date. Ed. David Thomas, et al. Leiden: Brill, 2009–.
CPG	Maurice Geerard and Jacques Noret, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*. 7 vols. Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–2003.
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium.
EI2	*Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition*. 13 vols. Ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Leiden: Brill, 1960–2009.
EI3	*Encylopedia of Islam, Third Edition*. Ed. Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson, et al. Leiden: Brill, 2007–.
GCAL	Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*. 5 vols. Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944–1953.
HMLÉM	Joseph Nasrallah, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'Église melchite du ve au xxe siècle*. 3 vols. in 6 [vol. 11.1 edited by Rachid Haddad]. Louvain: Peeters, 1979–1989 and Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1996.
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*. 161 vols. Ed. J.-P. Migne. Paris: Imprimerie Catholique, 1857–1866.

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PART 1

Arabic Language, Bible, and Qurʾān

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CHAPTER 1

An Arabic Christian Perspective on Monotheism in the Qur'ān: Elias of Nisibis' *Kitāb al-Majālis*

David Bertaina

1 The Qur'ān and Christian Monotheism

On 19 July 1026, the Muslim vizier Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī visited with the local bishop of Nisibis, Elias bar Shīnāyā. At one point during the social call, al-Maghribī expressed doubt that the Christians mentioned in the Qur'ān belonged to the same community as contemporary Christians. According to the Islamic commentary tradition, the faithful monotheist Christians in the Qur'ān's audience had become Muslims, while the Christians of medieval times were a different community castigated for failing to acknowledge the Prophet Muḥammad and guilty of Trinitarian polytheism. According to al-Maghribī, current Christians had failed to uphold authentic monotheism. Elias responded to al-Maghribī's accusation with the following reasoning:

> If the Christians mentioned in the Qur'ān were not the Christians of this time, then there would be no reason to accept the poll tax from them required in the Qur'ān which [Muslims] took from the Christians of that time. It would not be permissible to eat their slaughtered meat or to marry their women the way the daughters of those [Christians] were married and their slaughtered meat was eaten. But, because Muslims interact with Christians in this time in the same way they interacted with Christians of the past with regard to the poll tax and slaughtered meat, it is proven that they are the [same] Christians mentioned in the Qur'ān.

لو كان النصارى المذكورون في القرآن غير نصارى هذا الزمان، لَما وَجَبَ أن يُرضى منهم بالجزية المفروضة في القرآن والتي أخذوها من نصارى ذلك الزمان. ولَما وَجَبَ أن تُؤكَل ذبائحُهم وتُنكَح بناتُهم كما كانت تُنكَح بناتُ أولئك، وتُؤكَل ذبائحُهم. وإذ يَجري المسلمون في هذا الزمان مع النصارى مَجراهم مع النصارى المتقدّمين في الجزية والذبائح، فثبت أَنهم النصارى المذكورون في القرآن.[1]

1 Laurent Basanese, "L'amour de Dieu dans les Limites de la simple Raison: Foi et raison dans

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Why was the Qur'ān's position on Christian monotheism so important to Arabic-speaking Christianity? The Qur'ān considered Christians—along with Jews—the People of the Book. This qur'ānic claim set them in a special category of monotheistic communities possessing scriptures from God. This status connected Christianity with Islam and thus strengthened medieval Christian claims to sharing belief in the same one God. Yet the Qur'ān also accused a Christian group of professing that "God is the third of three" (Q 5:77). Interpreters used theories of abrogation to argue that verses affirming the salvation of Christians (e.g., Q 2:62) were superseded by passages indicating that only Muslims would enter heaven (e.g., Q 3:85). Further, Christians were called *al-Naṣārā* in the Qur'ān (corresponding to the Syriac *Naṣrāyē* or Nazarenes) but the word had no clear connection with the later Arabic term for "Christians" (*al-Masīḥiyyūn*). Thus, some interpreters believed that the Christians of their time and place were not identical to the communities mentioned in the Qur'ān because they did not profess the same type of monotheistic belief in God.[2]

This interpretation had implications for communal life within the Islamic world: the appropriation of taxes, the legal observances regarding marriage, and the suitability of various foods were only three aspects that bound up Christians with Muslim polity. Depending upon a jurist's interpretation, the Qur'ān was used to create distinct standards for how to treat religious others within a specific territory. Given the fact that the Qur'ān's position was ambiguous regarding the status of Christians, at times seeming to acknowledge their salvation, while at other times appearing to accuse Christians of acts of unbelief, interpreters explained away the reasons why Christians could retain benefits and securities promised in the Qur'ān.[3] They prioritized certain verses over others (according to a carefully-constructed historical narrative) as an exercise in interpreting and abrogating some verses of the Qur'ān by others to project a

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la pensée d'Ibn Taymiyya à la lumière de la théologie spirituelle d'Élie de Nisibe" (PhD diss., Pontificium Institutum Studiorum Arabicorum et Islamologiae, Rome, 2010), 64. This is a reproduction of the Arabic edition in Louis Cheikho, "Majālis Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn," *al-Machriq* 20 (1922): 117–122; here 122. Nikolai N. Seleznyov has also published a critical edition in Arabic, along with a Russian translation, of the the seven sessions along with the letter of Elias of Nisibis to al-Maghribī. See Seleznyov, ed. and trans., *Kitāb al-Majālis li-Mār Iliyyā muṭrān Nuṣaybīn wa-Risālatuhu ilā l-wazīr al-kāmil Abī l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Maghribī* (Moscow: Grifon, 2017/2018).

2 Islamic polemicists argued that the names of later Christians were not identical with those in the Qur'ān and the true Christians were individuals such as the monk Bahira. See for instance Abū ʿUthmān al-Jāḥiẓ, "*Min kitābihi fī radd ʿalā l-naṣārā*," in *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 4 parts in 2 vols. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khābakhī, 1979), 3:311–312.

3 See for instance ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Critique of Christian Origins: A Parallel English-Arabic text*, ed. and trans. G.S. Reynolds and S.K. Samir (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2010).

desired historical and legal status for Christians that would correspond somewhat to the social realities that were encountered in medieval life.

The opening anecdote from Elias' dialogue with the vizier al-Maghribī is instructive for this subject. Does the evidence indicate that Islamic commentaries were informed by discussions with Christians who may have influenced and/or contributed to their interpretation? An affirmative answer to this question would paint a picture in which Christians and Muslims in tandem developed an interpretive framework for the Qur'ān in the Middle East. It would suggest that medieval Christian-Muslim dialogue contributed to real changes in communal relations and not just the creation of artificial literary boundaries. If this is the case, then Elias' dialogue with al-Maghribī might help us to better understand how Christians responded to qur'ānic interpretation and how Christian agency contributed to the evolution of Qur'ān interpretation over time. This story recounted by Elias of Nisibis reveals important information about medieval Arabic-speaking Christianity and helps us comprehend their historical context more clearly.

2 Elias of Nisibis

Metropolitan Bishop Elias bar Shīnāyā of Nisibis (975–1046) was a noteworthy intellectual from the East Syriac ("Nestorian") Church of the East.[4] He was born in northern Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq). As a Syriac Christian, he was a non-Arab but was fluent in both Syriac and Arabic. He was made the Archbishop of Nisibis in 1008. Until his death in 1046, Elias composed nearly thirty works that have passed down to us today.[5] Elias published pieces in the fields of science, linguistics, theology, philosophy, and history that demonstrated his familiarity with other Christian and Muslim writers.[6] One of Elias' most sig-

4 See Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "Elias of Nisibis," in *CMR*, 2:727–741; David Bertaina, "Elias of Nisibis," *EI3*, 2014/4:85–88; Stephen Gerö, "Elias of Nisibis," *Religion Past and Present*. Brill Online, 2015. Reference: http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/religion-past-and-present/elias-of-nisibis-SIM_04239 (Accessed 19 September 2015). See also the articles in Samir Khalil Samir, *Foi et Culture en Irak au XIe siècle: Elie de Nisibe et l'Islam* (Aldershot, England: Variorum, 1996).

5 For a comprehensive survey of his writings, see Samir Khalil Samir, "Un auteur chrétien de langue arabe, Élie de Nisibe," *Islamochristiana* 3 (1977): 257–284; republished as "Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien: Elie de Nisibe (Iliyyā al-Naṣībī) (975–1046)," in Samir, *Foi et Culture en Irak au XIe siècle: Elie de Nisibe et l'Islam*.

6 Antoine Borrut noted that Elias cited sixty different sources by name in his historical works, an impressive fact for his time. See "La circulation de l'information historique entre les

nificant works was the *Book of Sessions* (*Kitāb al-Majālis*), which was based upon seven discussions he had with the local Muslim vizier Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Maghribī (981–1027).[7] Over the course of the year 1026, Elias held several discussions with the local Shīʿī Muʿtazilī vizier al-Maghribī. These conversations served as the basis for a later book made up of seven separate dialogues with the vizier.

The Arabic text of the third dialogue recounts their conversation about the Qurʾān's view of Christian monotheism and the possibility of the Christians' salvation. In the discussion, Elias argued that based on linguistic, logical, qurʾānic and historical criteria, Christians should undoubtedly be considered monotheists who will be saved by God within their own religion.

The work was intended for a wide and diverse audience at its outset. It was sent to the patriarchal secretary to be endorsed by the Church of the East. Manuscripts are found in the East Syriac, West Syriac, and Melkite traditions. Themes introduced by Elias were also adapted by later apologists for use in their own works (e.g., Paul of Antioch) demonstrating its impact on Christian audiences across the Arabic-speaking Middle East. The discussion also discloses Elias' view of the Qurʾān. He recognized its historical and legal significance for Christian roles in public life. In other discussions with the vizier, Elias revealed his skepticism regarding its purportedly miraculous origins and its status as a scripture. At the same time, Elias engaged with al-Maghribī's known views of the Qurʾān. Our knowledge of al-Maghribī's writings indicates that he tended to rely on other Muslims' views regarding Christian monotheism, such as al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), and his arguments in their conversation reflected this too.

Elias did not present his work as a fictive dialogue. It was written and intended to be his historical account of their discussion with his own reflections and evidence of what transpired. An extant letter exchange between Elias and al-Maghribī confirms that this publication was part of Elias' plans and not hidden from al-Maghribī but even endorsed by him. Three letters between Elias and al-Maghribī shed light on this matter. The first letter was written by the Muslim vizier to Elias. The second letter is a response from Elias containing a

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sources Arabo-Musulmanes et Syriaques: Élie de Nisibe et ses sources," in *L'Historiographie Syriaque*, ed. Muriel Debié (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, 2009), 137–159, here 144.

7 For a brief overview of the fifth and sixth dialogues, respectively, see Martino Diez, "The Profession of Monotheism by Elias of Nisibis: An Edition and Translation of the Fifth Session of the *Kitāb al-majālis*," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 28 (2017): 493–514; and David Bertaina, "Science, Syntax, and Superiority in Eleventh-Century Christian-Muslim Discussion: Elias of Nisibis on the Arabic and Syriac Languages," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 22 (2011): 197–207.

summary of their discussions. The third letter is a response from al-Maghribī commending Elias' literary style and accomplishment.[8] The letters help verify that Elias had a cordial bond with the vizier.

Elias' discussion with al-Maghribī took place under the ruler Naṣr al-Dawla Aḥmad ibn Marwān (ruled 1011–1061), who facilitated a productive although brief renaissance for Christian-Muslim relations in northern Mesopotamia. Elias acknowledged Marwanid rule in his writings. For instance, he referred to Naṣr al-Dawla as the "victorious emir" in his *Chronicle*.[9] Elias used his knowledge of Syriac and Arabic to his advantage in public affairs and private matters.[10]

3 Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī

Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī was well-known for his political ambitions and writings.[11] Born into a powerful family of Shīʿī Persian administrators, al-Maghribī served the Fatimid caliphate in Egypt in an office responsible for the collection of agricultural taxes and revenues along with his father. But due to palace intrigues, al-Maghribī's entire family was put to death by order of the caliph al-Ḥākim (985–1021). Al-Maghribī was the sole member of his family to escape. After being granted refugee status among the Bedouins in Palestine, al-Maghribī incited a failed rebellion, and eventually had to flee further eastward to Baghdad. While he served in a number of offices, he ran afoul of the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Qādir (ruled 991–1031). Al-Maghribī again sought refuge, this time under the Marwanid leader Naṣr al-Dawla, who granted him the office of vizier at Mayyāfāriqīn in Mesopotamia.

Al-Maghribī was known for his literary output. He composed a summary of a work on logic, a book on social manners, a book of *adab* poetry and letters,

8 There is one extant manuscript of the letters: Sbath 1131, also called MS Aleppo, Fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem—Ar. 318, fols. 31r–71r (1737 AD). See Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "Elias of Nisibis," 733.

9 Elias of Nisibis, *Eliae metropolitae Nisibeni Opus chronologicum*, CSCO 62/63, ed. E.W. Brooks and trans. J.-B. Chabot (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae, 1910; reprint: Louvain: Peeters, 1962), vol. 62, 1:226.

10 On the impact of these dialogues for understanding Christian-Muslim relations, see Laurent Basanese, "Élie de Nisibe (975–1046), un évêque arabe expose sa foi à un musulman: Analyse et prospectives," in *One Faith, Various Ways of Communicating It: Some Significant Examples in the History of Christianity*, ed. A. Wolanin (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2013), 105–122.

11 See Pieter Smoor, "Al-Maghribī," in *EI2*, 5:1210–1212.

and a letter to a leader on proper political rule. Finally, al-Maghribī composed a commentary on the Qur'ān called *al-Masābīḥ fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*.[12] During the dialogue, Elias ascribed some qur'ānic views to al-Maghribī which can be compared against al-Maghribī's own commentary to give us further information about his views of religious others.[13]

4 The Third Dialogue Session

Al-Maghribī died on 15 October 1027. Since the dialogue took place on 19 July 1026 and the two men corresponded about them afterward, the collection of dialogues between Elias and al-Maghribī are dated to 1026–1027. My chief concern is not the extent to which these dialogues were faithful reproductions of conversations that took place. Rather, my purpose is twofold. First, we should notice that Elias of Nisibis employed an Islamic framework to interpret the Qur'ān, evaluate its historical context, and apply its meanings in daily life, rather than using a Christian biblical model. Elias' contributions refined qur'ānic interpretation in the Islamic community. Second, when Elias described pre-Islamic and Islamic times, he did so in the form of a historical argument. He believed that responsible use of sources and understanding past people on their own terms were key attributes for faithful interpretation; one finds further examples of this in his *Book of Proof* (*Kitāb al-Burhān*) and *Chronicle*.[14] This conclusion is borne out by Elias' use of sources. For instance, Elias frequently quoted his sources in his historical writings, including several Islamic works. Muslim intellectuals including Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī (d. 847), al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), Abū Ṭāhir (d. 925), al-Ṣūlī (d. 947) and

12 His commentary has been published as Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī, *al-Masābīḥ fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm* (*The Lights of Commentary on the Great Qurʿān*), ed. ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd Allāh (PhD diss., al-Azhar University, 2000). All quotations of al-Maghribī's commentary are taken from this edition. The dissertation is only a partial edition of the first seventeen sūras of the Qur'ān. The remaining text is still unpublished.

13 The following works of al-Maghribī have been published: Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Maghribī, *al-Munakhkhal: mukhtaṣar Iṣlāḥ al-manṭiq* (*The Sieve: Summary on the Recovery of Logic by Ibn al-Sikkīt*), ed. J. Ṭulba (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1994); Ibid., *Kitāb al-ināṣ bi-ʿilm al-ansāb* (*Book of Social Manners*), ed. I. Ibyārī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1980); ibid., *Adab al-khawāṣṣ: fī al-mukhtār min balāghāt qabāʾil al-ʿArab wa-akhbārihā wa-ansābihā wa-ayyāmihā*, ed. Ḥ. Jāsir (Riyadh: Dār al-Yamāma, 1980); ibid., *Kitāb fī al-siyāsa* (*Book on Politics*), ed. S. Dahhān (Damascus: al-Maʿhad al-Faransī bi-Dimashq lil-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabiyya, 1948).

14 There is a German translation of Elias' *Kitāb al-Burhān* in Ludwig Horst, *Des Metropoliten Elias von Nisibis* Buch der Wahrheit des Glaubens (Colmar: Eugen Barth, 1886).

Thābit ibn Sinān (d. 976) appear in his *Chronicle*.[15] His discussions with al-Maghribī similarly showed knowledge of Islamic intellectual works.[16]

In 1922, Louis Cheikho published an Arabic edition of the third dialogue between Elias of Nisibis and the vizier al-Maghribī in *al-Mashriq*.[17] More recently, Sidney Griffith published a book chapter on the genre of the *majlis* that surveyed these dialogues.[18] Samir Khalil Samir published critical editions of the first, sixth, and seventh dialogues as well.[19] Recently, Laurent Basanese made the most important contribution relevant to the third dialogue called *Fī iqāmat al-dalīl ʿalā tawḥīd al-naṣārā min al-Qur'ān*. He reproduced Cheikho's Arabic edition, with minor changes, along with a French translation and brief study.[20] Basanese divided up the discussion into an introduction and five chapters: 1) a general response by Elias; 2) a discussion on the subject of Q 2:62; 3) other Qur'ān passages in favor of Christian monotheism; 4) a response to the objection that the Christians mentioned in the Qur'ān were different than contemporary Christians (including the passage cited at the beginning of the article); and 5) the Christian faith in the Trinity does not disqualify them from being monotheists.

Given the interest in this discussion, a deeper analysis of its contents will help us better understand the cross-pollinations between Christian and Muslim intellectuals in the medieval period and the role of Arabic-speaking Christianity in Islamic history. For instance, some scholarship has highlighted how Arabic Christian texts employed the Qur'ān. Sidney Griffith has done fundamental work to show that the Qur'ān was an attractive yet easily manipulated text in the hands of Christian exegetes.[21] Eighth-century Syriac writings, such as those by the monk of Bēt Hālē and Timothy the Patriarch of the Church of the East, made allusive references to the Qur'ān in terms of biblical interpreta-

15 Borrut, "La circulation de l'information historique entre les sources Arabo-Musulmanes et Syriaques: Élie de Nisibe et ses sources," 145.

16 See Witold Witakowski, "Elias Barshenaya's Chronicle," in *Syriac Polemics: Studies in Honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink*, ed. G.J. Reinink, W.J. van Bekkum, J.W. Drijvers and A.C. Klugkist (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 219–237.

17 Louis Cheikho, "Majālis Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn."

18 Sidney H. Griffith, "The Monk in the Emir's *Majlis*: Reflections on a Popular Genre of Christian Literary Apologetics in Arabic in the Early Islamic Period," in *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam*, ed. H. Lazarus-Yafeh, et al. (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1999), 13–65, here 48–53.

19 See the collected studies and editions in Samir, *Foi et Culture en Irak au XIe siècle: Elie de Nisibe et l'Islam*.

20 Basanese, "L'amour de Dieu dans les Limites de la simple Raison."

21 Sidney Griffith, "The Qur'ān in Arab Christian Texts; The Development of an Apologetical Argument: Abu Qurrah in the Mağlis of al-Ma'mūn," *Parole de l'Orient* 24 (1999): 203–233.

tion or apologetic arguments. By the ninth and tenth centuries, the historical origins and meaning of the Qur'ān came under more systematic scrutiny in the Arabic works attributed to the Arab Christian al-Kindī, the monk Abraham of Tiberias, the bishop Theodore Abū Qurra, and the refutation belonging to the Muslim convert to Christianity Būluṣ ibn Rajā'.[22] While some Arabic Christian authors wrote works intended to destroy the credibility of the Qur'ān, another tactic was to accept the qur'ānic text as a tool for argumentation with a special sensitivity for reading it as sympathetic toward Christian equality.

5 Christian Heretics in the Audience of the Qur'ān

According to Elias, the vizier met him during a visit to Nisibis in order to continue a conversation they had started previously about the Incarnation in Christian theology and its relationship to Islamic monotheism. The first dialogue recounted how the vizier al-Maghribī had acknowledged Christians as monotheists (*muwaḥḥidūn*). For the sake of further investigation, al-Maghribī returned to recite the words of Q 5:73: "Certainly they have disbelieved who say, 'Surely God is the third of three'."[23] In the first chapter, Elias explained to al-Maghribī that either the Qur'ān was referring to two different groups of Christians, or the Qur'ān was contradictory because it called them monotheists elsewhere.

Elias denied the second option's validity and chose the historical argument that the Qur'ān's accusations against Christian association (*shirk*) applied to other Christian groups. Since the Qur'ān sometimes mentioned Christians in a positive light alongside other monotheists, and at other times put them in a negative light, Elias reasoned that there were different types of Christians in the Qur'ān's audience. On some occasions, the Qur'ān testified to the monotheism of certain Christians. Elias took this to mean the Nestorian Church of the

22 For the al-Kindī text in English translation, see N.A. Newman, ed., *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue: A Collection of Documents from the First Three Islamic Centuries (632–900 A.D.); Translations with Commentary* (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 355–545. For Abraham of Tiberias, see Giacinto Bulus Marcuzzo, *Le Dialogue d'Abraham de Tibériade avec 'Abd al-Rahman al-Hashimi à Jérusalem vers 820* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, 1986). For Thedore Abū Qurra, see Wafik Nasry, *The Caliph and the Bishop: A 9th Century Muslim-Christian Debate: Al-Ma'mun and Abu Qurrah* (Beirut: CEDRAC, 2008). For Būluṣ ibn Rajā', I am planning to publish a forthcoming edition and translation of the work.

23 All quotations of the Qur'ān come from the English translation of Arthur Droge, *The Qur'ān: A New Annotated Translation* (Sheffield, UK: Equinox, 2013).

East, the Syrian Orthodox Jacobites and Orthodox Melkites, since they confessed that God was one. On the other hand, the Qur'ān's criticisms were meant for the heretical Christians groups in its audience, such as the Marcionites, Daysanites, Manichaeans and especially the Tritheists, who were active in the early seventh-century Arabian milieu. Using historical sources, Elias pointed out that the Marcionites believed in three divine numbered gods; the Daysanites and the Manichaeans claimed that there were two gods, one of whom was the creator of good while the other was the creator of evil; while the Tritheists were specifically targeted in Q 5:73 as those who say "God is the third of three."[24] Elias had already written about the origin of the Tritheists in his *Chronicle*.[25]

6 Why is Christian Salvation Promised and Impossible to Abrogate?

Salvation was an inclusive promise made in the Qur'ān, according to Elias. In the second chapter, Elias tried to persuade al-Maghribī that Q 2:62 could not be abrogated by other verses in its claim that: "Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians—whoever believes in God and the Last Day, and does righteousness—they have their reward with their Lord." But the vizier al-Maghribī insisted that Muslim commentators were divided about the historical priority of this revelation in the Qur'ān. Al-Maghribī believed the verse was abrogated by Q 3:85: "Whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers." Salvation only applied to Christians if they accepted Islam.

Using a grammatical argument, Elias insisted that the verse in sūrat al-Baqara could not be abrogated, since abrogation can only occur in an obligatory command form. Some commands were based on logic and non-negotiable, such as commanding belief in one God. On the other hand, God could have commanded one traditional practice for a time and then ordered another obligatory responsibility at a later date. The abrogation of commands was therefore only applicable to practices related to tradition, not dogma, since God would have contradicted Himself by abrogating reasonable commands such as the call to monotheism or obeying one's parents. In addition, Q 2:62 was in the form

24 See C. Jonn Block, "Philoponian Monophysitism in South Arabia at the Advent of Islam with Implications for the English Translation of '*Thalātha*' in Qur'ān 4.171 and 5.73," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 23.1 (2012): 50–75.

25 Elias of Nisibis, *Eliae metropolitae Nisibeni Opus chronologicum*, vol. 62, 1:121.

of an indirect discourse rather than a command, so it could not be abrogated. Finally, the Magians and Hindus were required to give up their faith and ritual, while the Christians were not required to do so under Islamic law, so it made logical sense that the Qurʾān included Christians among the monotheists.

Another Muslim interpretation of the passage, Elias conceded to al-Maghribī, was that the promise of salvation in Q 2:62 applied to Jews, Christians and Sabians only if they eventually converted to Islam. But Elias suggested this was a poor reading of the verse. The passage listed "those who believe" consecutively alongside the other three religious groups. Therefore, the Qurʾān must have assumed they were all inclusive of the promise of salvation. In fact, this interpretation paralleled that of the well-known commentator Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī (839–923), according to Elias. Al-Ṭabarī wrote that Christians would not fear God's judgment if they believed in the key creedal doctrines of God, judgment, resurrection, and the afterlife.[26]

7 Where Does Authority Reside for Interpreting the Qurʾān?

Elias of Nisibis believed that right authority for interpretation required historical understanding and a rational mind. In the third chapter of the third session, he cited seven passages from the Qurʾān for al-Maghribī, along with supporting evidence from Islamic commentators. He argued that since Muslim men were not supposed to marry non-monotheist women according to Q 2:221, and a Christian woman was not required to convert to Islam to marry a Muslim man, then the Qurʾān did not associate Christians with polytheism. In support of his analogy, Elias noted the "righteous community" mentioned in Q 3:113–114 were Christians, and if some Christians were righteous then they could not all be guilty of polytheism. Elias understood how contemporary Islamic law applied to local Christian communities and he used practical analogies to explain to al-Maghribī what he believed was the most historically appropriate interpretation of the verses. For instance, Q 22:40 confirmed the name of God was recited in monasteries and churches:

26 Instead of Q 2:62, Elias quoted from al-Ṭabarī's commentary on al-Māʾida 5:69, which is very similar. See Abū Jaʿfar ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1957), 10:476.

> Were Christians not monotheists, then [the Qur'ān] would not testify that they mention the name of God in their churches, just as Muslims mention His [name] in their mosques. Indeed, only monotheists mention the name of God. Nor would [the Qur'ān] draw an equivalency between mosques and churches.

> فلو كان النصارى غير مُوحِّدين، لَما شَهِدَ أَنَّهم يذكرون اسمَ اللهِ في بِيَعِهم، كما يذكُره المسلمون في مساجدِهم، إذ لا يَذكر اسمَ اللهِ إلَّا الموحِّدون، ولا كان يُساوي بين المساجد والبِيَع.[27]

Elias suggested to al-Maghribī that historical and rational contextualization of three other passages in the Qur'ān led to the conclusion that Christians were monotheistic, including 22:17, 9:5 (with allusions to 9:29, 4:92, 5:5, and 5:82), and 5:66. The "moderate community" lauded in 5:66 was the Christian community according to the traditionists Mujāhid (d. 722), Qatāda (d. 735), al-Suddī (d. 745), and Ibn Yazīd. Elias quoted their words directly from al-Ṭabarī's commentary on the verse.[28] For Elias, Islamic historical investigations were authoritative insofar as they were reasonable; theological polemics against Christians did not stand up to the rigors of historical methods. For instance, he found al-Ṭabarī's explanation of Q 5:82 quite useful because it commended some Christians:

> The correct view of the matter, in our opinion, is to say: the Exalted God speaks about a group of Christians—[a group] whom He praises as being closest in affection towards the community that has faith in God and His messenger [i.e., Muslims]. [God] says that the only [reason] why they were so [affectionate towards the Muslims] is that they had people of religion among them, [who were] diligent in worship, and monks in monasteries and cells and that they had among them scholars of their Scriptures, knowledgeable in reading them. It is because they humbly submit to the truth, when they recognize it, and are not too arrogant to accept it, when they discern it, that they are not far from the believers [i.e., Muslims]—not like the Jews, who have become accustomed to killing the prophets and the messengers, disobeying God's commandments and prohibitions, and corrupting the revelation given [by God] in His Scriptures.

27 Basanese, "L'amour de Dieu dans les Limites de la simple Raison," 56; Cheikho, "Majālis Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn," 120.

28 al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, 10:465–466.

إنَّ الصواب، في ذلك عندنا، أن يُقال: إنَّ اللهَ تعالى أخبَر عن النَفَر الذين أثنى عليهم من النصارى بِقُرب مَوَدَّتِهم لأهل الإيمان بالله ورسولِه، أنَّ ذلك إنَّما كان منهم لأنَّ منهم أهل دين، واجتهاد في العبادة، وترهُّب في الأديرة والصوامع. وأنَّ منهم علماءَ بكتبهم، وأهل تِلاوة لها. فهم لا يبعدون من المؤمنين، لتواضُعِهم للحقّ، إذا عرفوهُ، ولا يَستكبِرون عن قبولِه، إذا تبيَّنوهُ وليس كاليهود، الذين قد تدرَّبوا بقتل الأنبياء والرسل، ومُعارضةِ الله في أمرِهِ ونَهْيِه، وتحريف التنزيل الذي أنزل في كتبِهِ.[29]

Elias believed that the Qur'ān had to be understood within the historical context of mainline Islamic interpretation and applied practically toward Christian communities. Elias granted al-Ṭabarī's words validity insofar as they supported his arguments that Islamic legal practices should be charitable toward Christians and that Islamic models of history and interpretation should acknowledge that Christians were monotheists struggling in obedience to God.

8 Communal Conduct

Al-Maghribī asked for a further justification for treating Christians as monotheists in the fourth chapter of the third session. He suggested that the Christians mentioned in the Qur'ān were different than those of contemporary churches (as addressed in this article's opening). Elias replied, once again, that al-Ṭabarī's collection of interpretations ran contrary to the vizier's assumption. Citing the Muslim commentator's analysis of the permissibility of eating Christian food from 5:5, Elias argued that the legal prescriptions and practices of contemporary times made these kinds of claims nonsensical. In short, Christian monotheism was not even compromised by their confession of the Trinity.

At the end of their conversation (the fifth chapter of the third session), Elias told al-Maghribī that other Muslim commentators accepted Christian monotheism. For instance, their near-contemporary, the Sunnī Ashʿarī judge Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib, known as al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013),[30] acknowledged as much in his *Kitāb al-Ṭams*:

29 Basanese, "L'amour de Dieu dans les Limites de la simple Raison," 62; see also Cheikho, "Majālis Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn," 121. See al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, 10:505–506.

30 See R.J. McCarthy, "Al-Bāḳillānī," in *EI2*, 1:958–959.

> Know that if we were to have an honest discussion with the Christians about their statement "God is a substance with three hypostases," no disagreement between them and us would arise, except in nomenclature. This is because they say that "God is a substance" not in the sense of created substances, but [only] in the sense that He is self-subsistent.

> اعلَمْ أنَّ النصارى، إذا حقَّقْنا معهم الكلامَ في قولهم «أنَّ اللهَ جَوهَرٌ ذو ثلاثةِ أقانيم،» لم يَحصُل بيننا وبينهم خلافٌ إلاَّ في الاسم. لانَّهم يقولون «إنَّ اللهَ جَوهَرٌ» لا كالجواهِر المخلوقة، بمعنى أنَّه قائمٌ بذاتِه.[31]

While al-Bāqillānī noted the meaning is sound, he also clarified that the term "substance" (*jawhar*) could not be attributed to God, thus invalidating Christian language about a Triune God. Regardless, al-Maghribī insisted that al-Bāqillānī's analysis had no authority since was a Sunnī theologian. But in light of the other evidence presented, Elias convinced the vizier to accept his claims that Christians should be treated as monotheists under his domain.

9 Elias as Historian and Exegete

The dialogue is representative of Elias' qualities as an exegete and historian. He analyzed primary sources, cited supporting interpretive evidence, and used historical-critical arguments of those sources. Elias offered a theory of historical development for recovering the Qur'ān's intended audiences. He used the same method to distinguish between what he saw as authentic and heretical Christianity. For instance, he emphasized the historical existence of Tritheism, which was a Christian heresy prevalent in the regions of Egypt, Syria-Palestine, and Arabia during the period when the Qur'ān emerged. Although the discussion revolved around qur'ānic interpretation related to Christian monotheism, Elias' historical approach used the Qur'ān and its interpreters as source evidence for his arguments. He also cited them accurately. Antoine Borrut likewise noted that in all twenty-seven references to al-Ṭabarī in Elias' *Chronicle*, his quotations demonstrated a great fidelity to the original text.[32]

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31 Basanese, "L'amour de Dieu dans les Limites de la simple Raison," 66; see also Cheikho, "Majālis Īliyyā muṭrān Naṣībīn," 122.

32 Borrut, "La circulation de l'information historique entre les sources Arabo-Musulmanes et Syriaques: Élie de Nisibe et ses sources," 148.

He believed his citations and historical interpretations accurately reflected the reality of past inter-religious practice and how it could be applied in the present.

While Elias of Nisibis' *Kitāb al-Majālis* was a literary apologetic, it exemplified the flourishing Islamo-Christian engagement found under eleventh-century Marwanid rule. Elias used Islamic sources ingeniously, including the theory of abrogation. He cited Islamic commentaries on the Qur'ān and made use of historical arguments to suggest that the Qur'ān's audience was made up of Christians, many of whom were monotheists. Although the discussion revolved around qur'ānic and Islamic interpretation of Christianity, the dialogue encouraged its readers to evaluate their historical sources in a critical fashion, thereby increasing the impact of Arabic Christianity on Islamic civilization.

10 Al-Maghribī's Commentary on the Qur'ān

Elias' dialogue was likely influenced by the works and thought of Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī. The vizier was not just a literary type to be used as a sounding board for Elias' ideas. When examining al-Maghribī's commentary *al-Masābīḥ fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, one finds several similarities between passages in the commentary and arguments used by al-Maghribī in the dialogue. This suggests that the dialogue contained authentic points which al-Maghribī had already made in his commentary. For instance, al-Maghribī quoted al-Ṭabarī repeatedly as an authority in his work, including the same traditionists mentioned in his chains of authority. This fact suggests that Elias cited al-Ṭabarī because al-Maghribī considered his writings acceptable or possibly because Elias knew that al-Maghribī cited him in his commentary. Given his numerous references to other Islamic sources, Elias may have been familiar with the vizier's commentary or the gist of it via his discussions with the vizier. On the other hand, when Elias' quoted al-Bāqillānī, a near-contemporary Sunnī authority, his words failed to generate any sympathy from al-Maghribī. This suggests that Elias utilized a text by al-Bāqillānī that he had in his library. This exchange lends truth to claim that al-Maghribī's oral arguments in the dialogue are authentic, if simplified.

One example that reinforces the inter-relationship between Elias' work and his knowledge of al-Maghribī's ideas in the commentary is found in the discussion of Q 2:62 on the salvation of Christians. In both Elias' dialogue and al-Maghribī's commentary, the vizier argued that initially the Jews, Christians, and Sabeans were part of God's faith, but then he cited other authorities propos-

ing that this verse had been abrogated. In the dialogue and the commentary, al-Maghribī quoted Q 3:85 stating that only those who enter Islam would be accepted by God:

> It is sometimes claimed that this verse was abrogated by His statement: "Whoever desires a religion other than Islam [it will not be accepted from him"]. This is impossible. A promise cannot be abrogated, because a promise is tantamount to a report, and a report cannot be abrogated.

وقِيلَ: إِنَّ هٰذِهِ الآيَةَ مَنْسُوخَةٌ بِقَوْلِهِ: «وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الإِسْلاَمِ دِيناً» وَذَلِكَ مُحَالٌ لاَ يُنْسَخُ الوَعْد، لأَنَّ مَخْرَجَهُ مَخْرَجَ الخبَرِ، والخبَرُ لاَ يُنْسَخ.[33]

In his commentary on 3:113, al-Maghribī agreed with al-Ṭabarī's sources that only those who became Muslims were included in the righteous community mentioned in the verse. But his commentary on this passage made no mention of Christians:

> "Among the People of the Book (there is) a community (which is) upstanding" [refers to] a people who believe in the messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family), and among them is ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām.[34] The Jews said, when he and ones like him converted to Islam: only the evil among us have converted to Islam, so [the verse] "they are not alike" was revealed, and many good Jews also converted to Islam as we have clarified at the end of [the commentary on] this sūra.

«مِنْ أَهْلِ الكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ» قَومٌ آمَنُوا بِرَسُول اللهِ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيه وَآلِه، مِنْهُم عبد الله بن سلام، كَانَتْ يَهُود قَالَتْ لَمَّا أَسْلَمَ هُو وَأَشْبَاهُهُ: مَا أَسْلَمَ إِلاّ أَشْرارنا، فَنَزَلَتْ «لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً» وَأَسْلَمَ مِنْ يَهُود آخَرُون مَرْضِيّون قَد بيَّنَّاهُم فِي آخِرِ هَذِهِ السُورَة.[35]

33 Al-Maghribī, *al-Masābīḥ fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm*, 143–144. His comments in this passage are mostly about the Sabians rather than Christians and Jews.

34 ʿAbd Allāh ibn Salām (d. 663) was a Jewish member of the community in Yathrib/Medina who converted and became a companion of Muḥammad. See Michael Lecker, "'Abdallāh b. Salām," in *EI3*, 2013/4:16–17.

35 Al-Maghribī, *al-Masābīḥ fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm*, 263.

In his description of the "moderate community" mentioned in 5:66, al-Maghribī believed this phrase pertained to the Ethiopian community of the ruling king (*al-Najāshī*) which is the same response given by al-Ṭabarī ("The king and people like him who spoke truthfully about Jesus," النَجَاشِي وأَشْبَاهُ القَائِلُون في عيسى بِالحَقّ). On the other hand, Elias quoted this exact section of al-Ṭabarī in his dialogue, because the comments were favorable for his argument. Here both men referred to the same source to interpret a verse, but their use of that material and its resulting conclusions were dramatically different.

In the case of Christians being closest in friendship to Muslims according to 5:82, al-Maghribī did not cite al-Ṭabarī's commentary as Elias chose to do in the dialogue. Instead, he noted the passage pertained to "the Negus and his companions," when the first believers fled to Ethiopia (Axum) and were taken in by the Christian community as refugees. Al-Maghribī then quoted an oral tradition attributed to Abū ʿUbayda (d. 639), one of the refugees, which declared that the Negus and his companion had converted to Islam.[36] Thus it is not clear in al-Maghribī's commentary if he took seriously the claims of Christian monotheism or Christianity unless it was a path to Islam. His dialogue with Elias, on the other hand, shows that some growth took place due to the social and legal realities of governing a region filled with Christians.

11 Conclusion

Elias of Nisibis and Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī were intellectual leaders in their respective religions. When called upon to write for their own communities, both showed more interest in traditional insider matters and less concern for religious others. But Elias used historical and exegetical interpretations in their conversation to explain their understandings of the Qurʾān, the commentators, and Christian monotheism. His supporting historical evidence included the Qurʾān and Islamic commentaries instead of Christian texts. He displayed awareness of Islamic theories of abrogation and argued that the Qurʾān could be read in a way that promised Christians were monotheists with a place in heaven. This evidence reaffirms that the Arabic-speaking Christian traditions were shaping conversations with their religious neighbors in the early eleventh century. Since we have texts belonging to both Elias and al-Maghribī, we can trace the intersecting paths of engagement and how they refashioned interpre-

36 Ibid., 396–397.

tations to suit different needs. This teaches us that eleventh-century Christian-Muslim relations were still sensitive to the interpretations of each other's communities.

When a community lacks political and military means to support its continued existence, that group must embrace the organizational structures of the hegemonic power and work within its system. During the early eleventh century, Arabic-speaking Christians were subject to Islamic political might and its legal systems. This situation necessitated rational and calculated responses by Christian leaders to guarantee their communities' continued stability and existence. Elias of Nisibis chose formal discussion with political and juridical leaders as the forum to advance his Christian interests within an Islamic context. By employing historical argumentation, quoting the Qur'ān, and citing Islamic commentaries, Elias supported his appeals for a sympathetic attitude toward Christians using evidence that was more likely to be accepted by Muslim leaders. However, this was not only an apologetic move by Elias. He frequently read Islamic texts and used them in his writings because it was part of his regional cultural tradition. Therefore Elias' works were an example of how Arabic Christianity was not a theoretical problem confined to "outsider status" in the Islamic world but rather it was a significant part of the non-Muslim population that demanded serious attention from Muslim leaders in the eleventh century. His writings further illustrate Arabic Christian agency and the accommodation of medieval Islamic interpretive frameworks to Christian readings of the Qur'ān. Elias took part in a longstanding cultural tradition of debate that shaped both the Islamic worldview and Arabic-speaking Christianity. This does not mean that Elias was part of an imagined harmony of faiths; his writings were typically occasional pieces designed to mitigate conflict. But Elias' discussions with Muslim juridical and political leaders shaped the policy-making and the legal interpretation of laws pertaining to Christians, as well as Qur'ān interpretation. His impact on Arabic Christianity was significant in its own right, as his Church community was a living tradition that contributed to the diverse cultural and religious fabric of the Middle East.

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CHAPTER 2

From Multiplicity to Unification of the Arabic Biblical Text: a Reading of the Rūm Orthodox Projects for the Arabization and Printing of the Gospels during the Ottoman Period

Elie Dannaoui

Since the last decade of the sixteenth century, the project of printing the Bible in Arabic and placing it at the disposal of Eastern Christians has gained momentum among Catholic missionaries and their activities in Bilād al-Shām.[1] The roots of this trend may be attributed to the outcome of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century and the adoption of the concept of *Sola Scriptura*, which highlighted the central role of the Bible. The Catholic Church then realized the importance of putting the Bible at the center of its own missionary activities. Since its foundation, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith has adopted this method as a means of establishing its missions among Arabic-speaking Christians in Bilād al-Shām without necessarily embracing the theological dimension of *Sola Scriptura*. On this basis, the Synod of Ras Baalbek in 1628 made it a priority to translate the Bible into the languages of the countries to which the missionaries were directed.[2]

The approach of placing the Bible in the center of missionary activity[3] dates back to before the foundation of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith.[4] In 1584, Cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, established a printing press in Florence to print Christian books in Eastern languages such as Arabic, Turkish, and Syriac.[5] Between 1590 and 1619 this printing house

1 I am most grateful to Fr. Loay Hanna and Ms. Nadine Chamma for their help at various stages of preparing this paper.

2 Gregory XIII (Pope 1572–1585) urged the project and the procuring of Arabic biblical manuscripts in preparation of a new edition.

3 The proposal in 1622 for the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to carry out the editing of an Arabic Bible was in part stimulated by the publication, by the Dutch Protestant scholar Thomas Erpenius, of an Arabic New Testament in 1616 and of an Arabic Pentateuch in 1622.

4 John A. Thompson, "The Origin and Nature of the Chief Printed Arabic Bibles," *The Bible Translator* 6.2 (1955): 51–55.

5 Robert Jones, "The Medici Oriental Press (Rome 1584–1614) and the Impact of Its Arabic

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published the four Gospels in Arabic[6] based on the translation of al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraj Hibat Allāh Ibn al-ʿAssāl.[7] Between 1590 and 1888 many Arabization projects and printing projects took place. The Polyglot edition was published in 1645,[8] the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith edition in 1671,[9] the edition of the Dominicans in Mosul between 1875 and 1878,[10] and finally the Jesuit edition of Beirut was produced between 1876 and 1888. Protestants adopted a similar approach, but concentrated their work on one project that produced a single translation, the Smith-Van Dyck translation of 1865.[11]

In light of these Catholic and Protestant activities in the field of Arabization and printing of the Bible, it is legitimate to ask some questions: Did Arabic-speaking Rūm Orthodox Christians have a role in these projects? Did they have their own projects? If the main motive for the completion of Western projects was "missionary," did the Rūm Orthodox have other motives and goals? This study does not claim to conduct a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of all the activity of Arabization and printing of the four Gospels during the Ottoman period, as this issue has been dealt with in many studies. Rather, the present study seeks to highlight exclusively the contributions of the Antiochian Rūm Orthodox Christians in the Arabization and printing of the Gospels during the Ottoman period, taking into account the many frameworks in which their projects were conceived and developed.

Publications on Northern Europe," in *The "Arabick" Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Robert Jones (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 88–108.

6 Michel van Esbroeck, "Les versions orientales de la Bible: Une orientation bibliographique," in *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia*, ed. Jože Krašovec (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 411–412.

7 Samuel Moawad published in 2014 a critical edition of this version in *Al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraj Hibat Allāh ibn al-ʿAssāl: Die arabische Übersetzung der vier Evangelien* (Alexandria: Madrasat al-Iskandariyya, 2014). See also: Samir Khalil Samir, "La version arabe des Évangiles d'al-Asʿad Ibn al-ʿAssāl. Étude des manuscrits et spécimens," *Parole de l'Orient* 19 (1994): 441–551.

8 Peter N. Miller, "Making the Paris Polyglot Bible: Humanism and Orientalism in the Early Seventeenth Century," in *Die europäische Gelehrtenrepublik im Zeitalter des Konfessionalismus*, ed. Herbert Jaumann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001), 59–85.

9 Paul Féghali, "The Holy Books in Arabic: The Example of the Propaganda Fide," in *Translating the Bible into Arabic: Historical, Text-Critical, and Literary Aspect*, ed. Sara Binay and Stefan Leder (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2012), 37–51.

10 Antoine Ūdū, "Al-Kitāb al-muqaddas ṭabʿat al-ābāʾ al-dūminīkān fī l-Mawṣil (1875–1878)," in *Tarjamāt al-Kitāb al-muqaddas fī l-sharq*, ed. Ayyūb Shahwān (Beirut: al-Rābiṭa al-kitābiyya, 2006), 27–42.

11 David D. Grafton, *The Contested Origins of the 1865 Arabic Bible: Contributions to the Nineteenth Century Nahḍa* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

To answer the aforementioned research questions, this study adopts the following methodology:

– Identifying and describing the main projects of the Antiochian Rūm Orthodox Christians for the Arabization and printing of the Gospels during the Ottoman period, this study provides information on the framework in which each of these projects was launched and on the stakeholders of the projects, in addition to the reasons and motives behind them. This section analyzes the methodology, sources, and tools of each project.
– Analyzing projects of the Antiochian Rūm Orthodox Christians: This analysis aims to show the characteristics of the approach of the Antiochian Rūm Orthodox Christians to the Arabization and printing of the Gospels during the Ottoman period. To achieve this goal, the study analyzes the common elements of these projects in light of their equivalents in other Western projects.

1 Meletius Karma: towards an "Ecumenical" Translation

In the 1620s, Meletius Karma[12] began preparing a new Arabic translation of the Bible in collaboration with the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome.[13] Not enough information about the launch of the idea remains, but the archives of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome contain some important documents that highlight the content of this project.[14] On May 12, 1629, Karma sent a letter to the congregation in Rome presenting a complete vision of a new translation of the Bible.[15] He maintained that the first phase of the project was to collect and collate common translations in the

12 Metropolitan of Aleppo (1612–1634), then Patriarch of Antioch (d. 1635). For his biography see: Joseph Nasrallah, *HMLÉM*, IV.1:70–86.

13 For more information about Karma's project see: Hilary Kilpatrick, "Meletius Karmah's Specimen Translation of Genesis 1–5," in *Translating the Bible into Arabic: Historical, Text-Critical, and Literary Aspect*, ed. Sara Binay and Stefan Leder (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2012), 63–74, and Elie Dannaoui, "Aḍwāʾ ʿalā dawr al-muṭrān Malātiyus Karma fī tarjamat al-kitāb al-muqaddas ilā l-lugha al-ʿarabiyya," *Al-Nashra al-Baṭriyarkiyya* 26 (2017): 42–45.

14 These documents are classified as *SOCG* (= *Scritture Originali riferite nelle Congregazioni Generali*). Makāriyūs Jabbūr and Tawfīq Ziyād published the documents related to Karma in: *Wathāʾiq hāmma fī khidmat Kanīsatinā al-Anṭākiyya: Man ṣanaʿa al-inshiqāq sanat 1724* (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Nūr, 2000). For more details about these documents see: Carsten Walbiner, "Melkite (Greek Orthodox) Approaches to the Bible at the Time of the Community's Cultural Reawakening," in *Translating the Bible into Arabic: Historical, Text-Critical, and Literary Aspect*, ed. Sara Binay and Stefan Leder (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2012), 53–61.

15 *SOCG*, vol. 181, fol. 208.

East; therefore, he asked the cardinals to help him by dispatching someone to collect copies (*nusakh*) of the Bible in Arabic used by the Christians of the East. According to Karma, these copies existed in the following places: Tripoli, Beirut, Damascus, Egypt, Sinai, and Jerusalem. In this letter, Meletius also mentioned that he had another copy, the Aleppo version. The term *nuskha* appears in the sense of "version," not "copy," presumably representing different traditions of textual transmission.

Karma focused on the differences among the seven families of texts and concluded that the source of the textual variants was that these translations were not based on a single *Vorlage*, but on several different versions in Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, Armenian, and Coptic. The cardinals did not accept his hypothesis that the diversity of languages was the primary reason for the different translations, but thought the difference may have occurred for other reasons.[16] For example, the diversity of families or the textual traditions to which the original texts belong may have led to divergent versions (e.g., the Greek text of the Bible was received in more than one textual tradition or family). Further, scribal errors before the advent of printing had led to differences, such as those among Latin versions all of which rely on the text of the Vulgate.

The idea of this project falls within the framework of a broader project that Karma launched, namely the overall improvement of service books in Arabic.[17] In his letter, Karma had noted that the current translations were not free of additions and changes introduced by "heretics," and therefore needed to be corrected and "purified" (*taṭhīruhā*). It is likely that he was referring to translations from the Syriac and Coptic texts of the Oriental churches. It is also likely that this position might have resonated positively with the cardinals on the basis of their position towards the amendments made by the Protestants to the translations in the West.

Karma suggested the following methodology:

- Collect the various versions of the text;
- Form a team of six people: two secretaries (one for Greek and one for Arabic), two linguists (the first is to have mastered the Greek language and the second is to be fluent in Arabic), and two other people to collate the texts and identify the variants;
- Compare Arabic translations and match them with Greek and Latin texts.

Karma then set out a roadmap for the project.

16 *SOCG*, vol. 181, fol. 36.

17 Dannaoui, "Aḍwā'."

2 Parameters for the Translation Project

Apparently, Karma had expressed some concerns and feared that mistakes would be repeated as in the case of the earlier texts printed in Rome. He justified his position that the translations be done in Aleppo by saying: "Arabic is our language …"[18] Actually, he wanted this project to be conducted in Aleppo so that the translation would not constitute a point of contention with the Muslims on two levels. First, he expressed a concern related to the language of translation. He wrote to the cardinals saying that Muslim intellectuals held the Arabic language in great esteem and expected that literature would reflect the beauty and complexity of the language.[19] Secondly, Karma was keen to bring the terminology and theological ideas in a manner that did not provoke the anger and objection of Muslims.

Karma also wanted to limit the role of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in financing the project. He wanted the missionaries to oversee the collection of copies of the various versions of all the different translations, provision of the necessary books (dictionaries, language books, etc.), and finally, payment of the workers' fees. Karma did not need the help of the Congregation to collect the versions used by Antiochian communities (Damascus, Tripoli, Beirut, and Aleppo), since he had already gathered them himself. In his spare time, while he participated in the synod held in Ras Baalbek in 1628, Karma visited many monasteries in search of copies of the Bible to be included in the translation project. On November 12, 1629, he sent a report to Rome presenting his findings. His goal was to have access to Arabic translations outside the Antiochian ecclesiastical milieu, especially those found in Palestine and Egypt. To do this, he limited the Catholic role in funding through the allocation of tasks among various partners.

3 Adopting the Greek Text with the Possibility of Comparison with the Latin Vulgate

While Karma insisted on adopting the Greek language as a basis for translation, Rome communicated a different idea to him through his deacon Michael.

18 *SOCG*, vol. 180, fol. 59.

19 *SOCG*, vol. 180, fol. 59: لكنّ الآن علماء المسلمين الذين في بلادنا يحبّون الشرف ويتفاخرون في الكلام المزخرف … لمّا نظروا بعض تركيبٍ فيها ما أعجبهم لأنّهم زعموا أنّه غير مرتّب وأيضًا بعض لغته ما هي مقبولة في لسان العربي الفصيح.

It was recommended that since the version of the Bible adopted by the Church of Rome is the Vulgate, there was no need to return to other versions or translations scattered throughout the East. This decision of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith was contrary to the Karma's proposal. While Karma wanted to compile a revised translation from the well-known Arabic translations and print it in Greek and Arabic, Rome wanted only an Arabic version of the Vulgate without returning to the alternative translations used by Christians in the East.

In a letter dated February 20, 1631,[20] Karma informed Cardinal Ludovici that he had received the necessary books and that he accepted the plan to print the Bible in Arabic in Rome, provided that the text would be printed in two columns, one in Greek and the other in Arabic. Karma's position can be explained on two levels. The first is related to his principled position on the need to adopt the Greek text as the basis for translation; as a result, he insisted on printing the Greek text with its Arabic translation. The second is related to making the new publication useful for a wider spectrum of readers, since the Greek language was still used in some Rūm Orthodox circles. However, as a result of the divergent views between Karma and the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Rome decided to proceed with its own project and to abandon the collaboration with Karma. On December 5, 1631, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith decided to print a new translation of the Book of Genesis identical to the text of the Latin Vulgate. Regarding the layout, they opted for two columns: Latin and Arabic.

With this decision of the Congregation, the possibilities for Karma to gain financial support were greatly reduced. Consequently, he decided to pursue his own work on the translation of liturgical books. In the early eighteenth century, the Patriarch of Antioch Athanasius Dabbās revived part of this project with the help of the Church and the Governor of Romania. Dabbās succeeded in printing the four Gospels in two versions: the first including the four canonical Gospels according to the regular sequence; the second incorporating a lectionary for liturgical use.

20 *SOCG*, vol. 181, fols. 35v and 66v: ونطلب من كرمكم إذا كمل كتاب العتيقة والجديدة (أي العهدين القديم والجديد) تعملوا لكنيستنا واحد حقنين: حقن رومي وحقن عربي ...

4 Athanasius Dabbās and the First Printed Gospels in Arabic in the East

The Patriarch Athanasius Dabbās (1647–1724) is one of the pillars of the renaissance movement in the Rūm Orthodox Church of Antioch.[21] This cultural movement, initiated by Karma, spanned from the early seventeenth century to the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The Patriarch of Antioch Macarius III ibn al-Zaʿīm al-Ḥalabī (d. 1672) also played a crucial role in this movement. Dabbās himself made several significant contributions. For example, he considered the question of uniformity in the liturgical books and worked to improve the consistency of translations. This approach was initiated by Karma who elaborated new translations of various service books. These translations were widely used in Antiochian parishes without being considered as the official translations. By printing these translations, Dabbās actively contributed to the unification of the service books in Arabic, as well as the facilitation of the reading of the Gospels and other theological books. One of the main goals of establishing the printing press was to help Christians acquire copies for personal use at home. Dabbās expressed this in the introduction to the printed Gospels stating: "In order to make it easy for you to own it, and to acquire it, I started printing it …"[22]

Patriarch Athanasius Dabbās did not completely agree with his contemporaries on who was eligible to own the Gospel and on how the Gospel should be read. While the current practice among Arabic-speaking Rūm Orthodox emphasized that the community would listen to the Gospel during the liturgical services, in the introduction to his printed Gospels Dabbās declared that owning a personal copy of the Gospels was a "duty for every believer" because it contains "meanings that are suitable for all ranks" and can be used as "a powerful weapon and a sharp sword" against Western propaganda.[23] Some scholars saw Protestant influences in Dabbās's attitude. For example, Walbiner's hypothesis was that Dabbās had encountered Protestant theology in Valachia, and that this influenced his thinking on the role of the Bible.[24] The lack of information supporting this hypothesis leads us to tend towards prioritizing the pastoral aspect of Dabbās's printing project and to consider the apologetical role that he attributed to the Gospels in facing "non-orthodox" teachings.

21 On the intellectual revival see: Nasrallah, *HMLÉM*, vol. IV.1.

22 Athanāsiyūs Dabbās, *Kitāb al-Injīl al-sharīf al-ṭāhir wa-l-miṣbāḥ al-munīr al-zāhir* (Aleppo, 1703).

23 Dabbās, *Kitāb al-Injīl*, 2–6.

24 Walbiner, "Melkite (Greek Orthodox) Approaches."

Dabbās's translation was based on an ancient translation, the so called "Egyptian Vulgate." He said that he had translated the Gospels from the original Greek, stating in the introduction of his lectionary: "I collated it with the Greek by composing it sentence-for-sentence and I corrected its language [lit. its case endings, *iʿrābahu*] word-for-word …"[25] The importance of Dabbās's project is that it produced the first Orthodox edition of the Gospels, which took into account the various textual traditions that were common in the various Greek Orthodox churches.[26]

5 Ṣarrūf: the Standard Text

In the introduction to the 1903 lectionary, Yaʿqūb Ṣarrūf (1839–1912) claimed that he had re-printed the Gospels upon the request of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Damianos I (1897–1931), because the old edition, the *Shuwayriyya*,[27] was out of print. Ṣarrūf also confirmed the patriarch's preference of having the edition identical to the original Greek edition, "corrected and revised"—not partially corrected as the old version. Ṣarrūf's work came as a response to the needs of the local church and the request of the local patriarch in order to meet two objectives: to write in an eloquent Arabic language that the community could appreciate and to enhance the quality of the translated text of the Gospels. At the end of the introduction to the lectionary, Ṣarrūf writes that the revision of the *Apostolos* (the Epistle Lectionary) and the complete lectionary was only the first step towards a full edition of the New Testament. He asked his contemporary theologians to send him their feedback and their corrections to what he published in these two books. Ṣarrūf's 1903 edition was officially adopted not only in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, but also in the Patriarchate of Antioch. In 1981, the Patriarchate of Antioch published a new edition of Ṣarrūf's text with diacritics.

25 Dabbās, *Kitāb al-Injīl*, 4.

26 The Smith-Van Dyck project used this edition as well. See Loay Hanna, "The Famous Smith-Van Dyck Bible of 1860: Nothing Else but a Polished Re-edition of the Orthodox Gospels?" *Parole de l'Orient* 42 (2016): 255–270.

27 In 1734, an Arabic printing press began operating in Saint John's monastery (Dayr al-Shuwayr) in Khinshāra. In this monastery, the Greek Catholic Church re-printed Dabbās's lectionary, and the resulting version is known as *Shuwayriyya*. The text of this version copied Dabbās's text, but discarded the patristic commentaries (*qāla al-mufassir*). The printed lectionaries of this printing press were used in both Catholic and Orthodox parishes until the publication of Ṣarrūf's lectionary.

In collating the versions, Ṣarrūf included the "two recent translations" of the Gospels: the Smith-Van Dyck translation (1865) and the Jesuit version (1877). He conducted his work first by comparing the old printed edition (Dabbās's version of 1703) to the new translations (Smith-Van Dyck and the Jesuit) and to the printed Greek. Ṣarrūf continually referred to the ancient and modern versions of the Bible, as well as accompanying exegesis and hermeneutical considerations. Finally, he consulted theologians in Beirut for their recommendations.

By the end of the process, Ṣarrūf worked to select the closest variant to the original Greek. In this, he maintained two basic principles, first to preserve language eloquence and clarity of meaning, and second, to preserve the old Arabic translation. Ṣarrūf justified the first principle with the argument that the Christians of his time were well acquainted with the classical Arabic language and thoroughly enjoyed its literature. This first principle came in response to their expectations and was in line with their knowledge. In regard to the second principle, Ṣarrūf said that he gave great attention to preserving the "core of the Arabic text," *matn al-naṣṣ al-ʿarabī*, which he did partly out of concern that introducing major changes in the text might cause confusion and dissatisfaction among the believers. Ṣarrūf mentions this issue in the introduction to the *Apostolos* (published six months before the lectionary) when he notes that corrections were not made in previous editions in order to avoid "doubts and illusions among simple people." Ṣarrūf concluded that his translation was neither a "literal translation" nor a "translation according to meaning"; rather, it was a mixture of the two.

6 The Antiochian Vision of Reading the Gospels: Controversial Perceptions

After having presented the most important Antiochian projects for the translation of the Gospels during the Ottoman period, this study will now turn to the commonalities among them in order to identify the elements of a particular Antiochian vision of re-translating and printing the Gospels.

In his memoirs about missionary work in Syria, the American Henry H. Jessup described the celebration in Beirut on the occasion of the printing of the Smith-Van Dyck edition of the Bible at the end of a seventeen-year-long translation project. For the event, the celebrants composed a hymn giving glory and praise to God. Jessup wrote that "… for the first time, the Word of God is given to their nation in its purity."[28] The hymn, despite its ceremonial func-

28 Grafton, *Contested Origins*, 1.

tion, which may tend to overestimate the success of the new version, reflects a negative view of the Arabic translations of the Gospels that had been used by Arabic-speaking Christians previously. The perception of the function of the Gospels may be the main trigger of this negative attitude. Van Dyck's "modern" translation of the Bible was represented as the return of the sacred text to the lives of Arabic-speaking Christians centuries after a period when it had been removed from personal use. It was widely thought that the Orthodox did not know the Bible personally, but limited themselves to listening to biblical readings during liturgical services. This position was based on an analogy between the historico-theological framework of the West, in which the "Reformation" highlighted the centrality of the Bible, and the experience of the East in dealing with the Bible.

This comparison operated out of an inaccurate analogy between the East and West. In reality, the Arabic-speaking Christians had not been living with a language crisis concerning the Bible. Arabic translations of the Gospels had existed at least since the early Islamic period[29] and excellent translations have been available up until today.[30] The Bible had always been read in the language of the believers; no one was prohibited from re-translating it or revising its language. On the contrary, the preface of Dabbās's edition mentions the call of the Patriarch of Antioch to acquire the Gospels for individual homes, not only for the churches. For that reason, Dabbās printed the first edition according to the canonical sequence (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), while he dedicated the second edition to church use, i.e., the lectionary.

The Eastern Churches lived a distinctive experience that embodied the dialectical relationship between personal and collective reading of the Bible

29 Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

30 On May 18, 2017, the Digital Humanities Center at the University of Balamand launched PAVONe, the Platform of the Arabic Versions of the New Testament (http://pavone.uob-dh.org). PAVONe is a database dedicated to the Arabic manuscripts of the Gospels copied between the ninth and nineteenth centuries. The platform is a database comprising a digital corpus of digitized and transcribed Arabic manuscripts of the four Gospels and lectionaries including both explicit and implicit verses of the Gospels with different layers of metadata (textual, paleographical, codicological, linguistic, etc.). In addition to this digital corpus, the platform provides a set of tools to enable scholars and researchers to manipulate these manuscripts and facilitate their study of the text. See: Elie Dannaoui, "Digital Arabic Gospels Corpus," in *Digital Humanities in Biblical, Early Jewish and Early Christian Studies*, ed. Claire Clivaz, Andrew Gregory, and David Hamidović, in collaboration with Sara Schulthess (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 61–70, and Elie Dannaoui, "Qāʿidat bayānāt tarjamāt al-ʿahd al-jadīd ilā l-ʿarabiyya: Mashrūʿ balamandī ṭamūḥ," *Al-Nashra al-Baṭriyarkiyya* 26 (2017): 57–61.

without going through the crises of the West, which sometimes resulted in the creation of a gap between the faithful and the Bible. This was an experience unique to Eastern Christians, and it gave them a distinctive relationship to the Arabic Bible.

7 The "Orthodoxy" of the Text

The Rūm Orthodox Christians of the patriarchate of Antioch did not use a specific textual tradition or language when they constructed the early translations of the Gospels into Arabic, resulting in differences both in biblical and liturgical translations. This variety reflects an open attitude to the multiplicity of traditions and languages in the Arabophone environment. There was no official translation of the Gospels for liturgical use; sometimes the same service included more than one translation of the same verse without necessarily leading to questioning the "orthodoxy" or authenticity of the text. One can easily argue that the Arabic-speaking Rūm Orthodox did not know an official text similar to the Latin Vulgate or the *Textus receptus* until much later. It is believed that the concept of "official" text entered the Antiochian milieu from two Western origins. The first origin is the Roman Catholic Church, which had imposed the Vulgate as the sole official text on the Latin West. The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith adopted this approach and urged Bishop Meletius Karma to accept it as the framework for a new Arabic translation. The second source is Protestant, represented by the work of American missionaries in Beirut engaged in producing a new edition. Identifying and defining the source text for the new translation was the subject of considerable controversy between the translators and the mission board in the United States. These two factors contributed to questions about the authenticity of the source text, but the issue can also be approached from a different angle.

It is believed that the turning point in the history of the text came not only for theological, but for practical reasons as well. The Antiochians had to answer the question: "What translation do we print?" This was particularly important because printing would endorse a particular text and would perhaps be seen as authorizing it as *the*, or at least as *an* "official text." This would, in principle, limit the diversity and multiplicity of translations. For example, the printing of ecclesiastical Greek books in Venice formed an "Orthodox reference" that translators could adopt as an official source of text. This is what happened with liturgical books in general. Karma faced this challenge during negotiations with the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and it was clear in the discussions that the two parties were looking at the issue from different angles.

Despite the introduction of printing in Arabic in the early eighteenth century, the use of printed Gospels was rare. Manuscripts were still copied and used in the churches until publication of the works by the printing press of the Holy Sepulcher at the turn of the twentieth century made them widely available. It is believed that the rise of textual criticism and the publication of critical editions added a further dimension to the debate related to the original text.

8 Christian-Muslim Relations

Although these translation projects were primarily concerned with Christians, it was impossible to ignore the Muslim reader. The two main parameters that influenced the choices of the Christian translators were the Christian-Muslim dimension on the one hand, and Western missionary activities, both Catholic and Protestant, on the other. Accordingly, the following questions must be asked: What are the unique considerations for the projects of translating the religious books in the Rūm Orthodox Church of Antioch? Has Islam influenced the choices made in these projects, and if so, how and why?

Arabic translations of the Gospels were first known in the context of the early Islamic empires. In the great urban centers, such as Damascus, Baghdad, and Cairo, where followers of the two faiths mingled together closely, the Gospels were a regular topic of debate between Muslims and Christians alongside fundamental Christian and Muslim doctrines and beliefs. While Muslims often claimed that the Gospels were no longer reliable because of changes that had crept into them over the centuries, it is surprising how frequently Muslim scholars referred to them and quoted them.

It is obvious that the Muslim-Christian polemical paradigm incorporated two layers with regard to sacred scripture: the text and the reception of the text itself. While the textual layer is static in the case of the Quran (a single textual version was used by scholars from the two religions), it is very dynamic in the case of the Gospels (various versions of the same verse were used sometimes in the same period). Further, stability of the biblical text was not always the source of stability in its reception; rather, the desire to preserve stability in reception superseded concern for the stability of the text. This observation may lead us to hypothesize that in some cases scholars were not using the text as an "authoritative" source of theology, but as a proof of an "official" dogma embedded in the reception of their own sacred text. Consequently, the dialectical relationship between these two layers and how the Arabic translations dealt with them should be studied more carefully to understand the dynamic influence of Muslim questions and expectations upon Christian translations.

In the case of these translation projects, traces of this approach can be easily identified. For example, Karma refused the translation done by the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith because it would not be accepted by Muslims in Aleppo. Karma prioritized the reception of the text over the text itself in this instance. This was not the case, for example, with the Smith-Van Dyck translation. In that case, the committee debated the issue and decided to give the priority to the "Text" and not to the reception of the text by Muslims; arguably because it was addressed mainly to Arabic-speaking Christians. However, this decision did not put an end to the controversy. In 1936, the Presbyterian missionary E.F.F. Bishop raised the question of developing a new translation based on the previous Van Dyck version. As a missionary involved in work with Muslims, E.F.F. Bishop had concerns related to the use of Arabic terminology familiar to Muslims. Bishop stated: "Shall Christians have a book that Moslems cannot understand with words like *namus* substituted for *sharîat*? Shall we have the Gospel in a language which shall reach the Moslem, which will offend Christian sensibilities?"[31]

Three centuries before E.F.F. Bishop's question, Patriarch Athanasius Dabbās presented a solution by adopting a terminology widely accepted by both Christians and Muslims. The importance of Dabbās's contribution resides in the fact that he was the first to print it and consequently present it as the official Gospel text of the church. For example, he named the Gospel *Muṣḥaf sharīf*, knowing that *Muṣḥaf* would be used by Muslims for the Qurʾān. Additionally, he used the word *Tilāwa* instead of *Qirāʾa* to designate a pericope or a lesson. Maybe the most surprising case is the use of *Tanzīl* for "revelation" instead of *Waḥy*.

9 Conclusion

The value of the Rūm Orthodox projects remains understudied although it is attracting increasing attention. An accurate analysis of the text of these translations is vital if they are to be evaluated; such analysis could be approached on various levels. Knowing that the time span of these translations projects covers both the pre-*nahḍa* and the *nahḍa* periods, they significantly contribute to understanding how religion is potentially correlated to linguistic variation. For example, the Smith-Van Dyck translation and the work of Buṭrus al-Bustānī in the nineteenth century, are considered to be a turning point in the history of the Arabic language due to their contribution to modernizing the lexicon. By

31 Grafton, *Contested Origins*, 210.

admitting the hypothesis that the Smith-Van Dyck and the Dabbās translations are two different editions of the same text, it will become hard to exclude the Dabbās translation from the quest of the roots of modernizing the Arabic language in the late Ottoman period. The variety of Christian Arabic Gospels are treated either on dialectological basis or as part of a wider framework of Middle Arabic. A preliminary analysis of the language used in the Rūm Orthodox projects allows us to consider these language variations as denominational and makes us think of an Arabic Rūm Orthodox "religiolect."

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CHAPTER 3

Early Christian Arabic Translation Strategies (Matthew 11:20–30 in Codex Vat. Ar. 13)

Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala

1 Introduction

One of the surviving milestones from the period of growth of Christian literature in Arabic in the monasteries of ninth-century Palestine is the Arabic New Testament, contained in the oldest section of Codex Vat[icano] Ar[abo] 13.[1] The importance of this oldest section has always resided, primarily, in its early date. Guidi and Mai dated it to the eighth century. This dating was initially accepted by Graf, although years later he assigned it to the ninth century. Although this date is still accepted, an earlier date has been recently proposed by Kashouh for the archetype of Vat. Ar. 13.[2]

The surviving Gospel sections follow a twofold manuscript tradition: Greek and Syriac.[3] The manuscript was produced at the Palestinian monastery of Mār Sābā,[4] in the Judaean desert, where a large number of Melkite authors and copyists worked on the production, translation and copying of texts. Their

1 Sidney H. Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic: An Inquiry into Its Appearance in the First Abbasid Century," *Oriens Christianus* 69 (1985): 126–167, here 132; Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 117. The manuscript is viewable online: http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ar.13.

2 Ignazio Guidi, "Le traduzioni degli Evangelii in arabo e in etiópico," *Atti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei* 275 (1888): 6–37, here 8; Georg Graf, *Die christlich-arabische Literatur bis zur fränkischen Zeit* (*Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts*) (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1905), 10; Georg Graf, *GCAL*, 1:115, 138, 147, 150; Griffith, "The Gospel in Arabic," 132; Hikmat Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: The Manuscripts and their Families* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2012), 153–171; and Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic*, 50–51, 115–118.

3 Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "An Early Fragmentary Christian Palestinian Rendition of the Gospels into Arabic from Mār Sābā (MS Vat. Ar. 13, 9th c.)," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 1 (2013): 69–113. Kashouh, *Arabic Versions*, 153–155, 167–168, claims that an earlier text in Syriac served as the *Vorlage* of Vat. Ar. 13 under the influence of orally transmitted wording.

4 According to Kashouh, *Arabic Versions*, 159, the archetype of Vat. Ar. 13 emerged in Arabia. Sara Schulthess has recently argued that the codex Vat. Ar. 13 may have been copied in Homs—see Sara Schulthess, "Les manuscrits arabes des lettres de Paul: La reprise d'un champ de recherche négligé" (PhD diss., Université de Lausanne, 2016), 130–132.

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endeavours fostered the birth and development of a Christian textual tradition in Arabic,[5] and through their collaboration with monks from other *monasteria* they contributed to the creation of a new vehicle for cultural transmission in Arabic.[6]

One of the most intriguing aspects of the oldest section of the Gospels is the *Vorlage* used by the Arab translator. Guidi, who described it as a free, periphrastic translation,[7] claimed that it was made from a Greek text.[8] Monks working in the *scriptoria* had also been brought up to speak and write in Greek, since this was the language of the Byzantine Church. However, Syrian and Palestinian monks in ninth-century Palestine are known to have spoken an Aramaic dialect,[9] with an evident influence of the Aramaic dialectal milieu on Christian Arabic translators from Greek which is widely acknowledged.[10] This did much to foster the multilingual atmosphere of the Palestinian monasteries during the early period of Islamic rule.[11]

Our aim in the present paper is to offer some general reflections about the strategies used by the Arabic translator who rendered the oldest portion of the version of the Gospels contained in Codex Vat. Ar. 13 which can help to distinguish diachronically the different types of Christian Arabic translations in the early period (eighth-ninth centuries). The fragment studied here, Matthew 11:20–30, is found in fols. 16v–17r. In analyzing the fragment we have drawn on four Arabic versions divided into two groups, according to the *Vorlagen* on which those translations were done: a) Greek: Sa72 (= Sinai Ar. 72), B (= Berlin Orient. Oct. 1108), VB (= Vat. Borg. Ar. 95), V (= Vienna Or. 1544);[12] b) Syriac: Diat. (= Arabic Diatessaron).[13]

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5 Graf, *Christlich-arabische Literatur*, 6.

6 Joshua Blau, "A Melkite Arabic *lingua franca* from the Second Half of the First Millennium," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 57 (1994): 14–16.

7 Guidi, "Traduzioni," 7, 8; Graf, *Christlich-arabische Literatur*, 10. Cf. Kashouh, *Arabic Versions*, 153.

8 Robert P. Blake, "La littérature grecque en Palestine au VIIIe siècle," *Le Muséon* 78 (1965): 367–380.

9 George Every, "Syrian Christians in Palestine in the Early Middle Ages," *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 6 (1946): 363–372.

10 Joshua Blau, "The Influence of Living Aramaic on Ancient South Palestinian Christian Arabic," in *Studies in Middle Arabic and Its Judaeo-Arabic Variety*, ed. Joshua Blau (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988), 288–290.

11 Sidney Griffith, "From Aramaic to Arabic: The Languages of the Monasteries of Palestine in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51 (1997): 11–31.

12 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:146, 142, 143. The Vienna manuscript was edited by Paul de Lagarde, *Die vier Evangelien arabisch aus der Wiener Handschrift herausgegeben* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1864).

13 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:152–154. The Arabic Diatessaron was edited by Augustin-Sébastien Marmardji, *Diatessaron de Tatien* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1935).

Speaking now from the synchronic viewpoint, in order to lay out the strategies used by the Arabic translator of Vat. Ar. 13 in comparison with other Arabic translations, in this paper we follow the hypothesis that at least two texts were used in the Arabic translation of the oldest portion of the Gospels preserved in the codex Vat. Ar. 13. I believe that the Melkite Arabic translator worked with a Greek source text,[14] although he also used one or several of the Syriac versions for revising the final translation. This revision, which may have taken place during the translation process, obviously influenced the final Arabic version.

2 Translation Strategies

The traditional view that literal translation and free translation lie at either end of a continuum is of little value in elucidating the techniques and strategies adopted by translators. The present study seeks, instead, to apply the concepts of "literal" and "free" not to additions as a whole, but to segments of texts whose variability reflects the translator's choice or the interest of the unit in question. This first level of essential syntactic analysis is supplemented by a second level of analysis—also largely syntactic—focussing on word order and syntactic connections. A third level addresses lexical issues, choice of lexis being a key strategic feature of the translator's exegetical approach.[15]

The extracts drawn from the section under study are classified on each of the three levels; examination of each specific example is followed by general remarks on the strategies used by the translator.

2.1 *Literal Translations*

– (11:20) *ʿinda dhālika badaʾa Īsūʿ an yuʿayyir al-madāʾin*. The personal name Īsūʿ (*sic* Diat.; Sa72, B, V, VB omit) is found not only in the Peshīṭtā, but also in some Greek manuscripts (cf. § 6 below) which give ὁ Ἰησοῦς; this would appear to be the basis for the reading *Īsūʿ*, rather than the Syriac ܝܫܘܥ which one would expect to give *Yasūʿ*/*Yashūʿ*. Similarly, *yuʿayyir* ("reproach") recalls other Arab translations of Greek originals (*sic* B, VB < ὀνειδίζειν [cf. Peshīṭtā ܡܚܣܗ]; cf. V *yughayyir*; Sa72 *yuʿayyir*; Diat. *fī taqrīʿ*).

– (11:21) *al-wayl laki yā Kūrazayn wa-l-wayl laki yā Bayt Ṣayādhā an law kāna bi-Ṣūr wa-Ṣaydān al-ʿajāʾib wa-l-āyāt allatī kānat fīkumā*. A literal translation

14 The Greek text used for comparison is Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (28th rev. ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

15 Sebastian Brock, "Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique," *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 221 (1983): 1–14, here 5–8.

with the added parallel construction *al-ʿajāʾib wa-l-āyāt*, which—though it has no strict equivalent in Greek and Syriac—corresponds to δυνάμεις/ܚܝ̈ܠܐ.

– (11:22) *wa-lakinnī aqūlu lakum*. The Arabic is a word-for-word rendering of the Greek πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν with the addition of the 1st p. personal pronoun in the form of the pronominal suffix in *lakinnī*, whilst the Syriac text adds the 1st p. personal pronoun *ʾenā* (ܒܪܡ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟܝܢ).
– (11:24) *wa-lakinnī aqūlu laki inna*. Here, the lack of full equivalence with the Greek text (πλὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι > Sa72 *bal aqūlu lakum inna*) and the close correspondence with the Syriac text (ܒܪܡ ܐܡܪܢܐ ܠܟܝ ܕ) reflect the fact that the preposition+2nd p. feminine pronoun suffix *laki* (= ܠܟܝ ≠ ὑμῖν, 2nd p. pl.) refers to the city of Capernaum—which in Arabic and Syriac is feminine—whereas in the Greek text ὑμῖν refers to Jesus' interlocutors.
– (11:25) *fī dhālika al-zamān ajāba Yasūʿ*. The Arabic version (*sic* B, V, VB) may be a translation either of the Greek ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς or of the Syriac ܒܗܘ ܙܒܢܐ ܥܢܐ ܝܫܘܥ, itself a literal rendering of the Greek.
– (11:25) *ashkur laka yā abati rabb al-samāwāt wa-l-arḍ*. A literal translation either of ἐξομολογοῦμαί σοι, πάτερ, κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς or of ܡܘܕܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܐܒܝ ܡܪܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܘܕܐܪܥܐ, except for *ashkur*, a translation of the Syriac ܡܘܕܐ, rather than the Greek ἐξομολογοῦμαι, and the use of the plural *samāwāt* (Sa72, B, V, VB *samāʾ*) to translate the singular οὐρανοῦ, maybe with the interference of the Syriac ܫܡܝܐ understood as plural. On the vocative construction *yā abati* see § 9 below.
– (11:26) *naʿam yā abati hākadhā kānat mashīʾatuka*. A straightforward translation of ναί, ὁ πατήρ, ὅτι οὕτως εὐδοκία ἐγένετο ἔμπροσθέν σου/ܐܝܢ ܐܒܝ ܕܗܟܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܨܒܝܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܟ, omitting the preposition ἔμπροσθεν/ܩܕܡ (cf. § 7 below).
– (11:27) *laysa aḥad yaʿrifu al-ibn mā khalā al-ab wa-lā aḥad yaʿrifu al-ab illā al-ibn*. The two uses of *aḥad* correspond respectively to the adjective οὐδεὶς and to the indefinite pronoun τις, rather than to the noun ܐܢܫ ("man") used in the Syriac text. For the second coordinate clause *wa-lā aḥad yaʿrifu al-ab illā al-ibn*, cf. § 5.

καὶ οὐδεὶς	=	*laysa aḥad*	≠	ܘܠܐ ܐܢܫ
ἐπιγινώσκει	=	*yaʿrifu*	=	ܝܕܥ ܠ
τὸν υἱὸν	=	*al-ibn*	=	ܒܪܐ
εἰ μὴ	=	*mā khalā*	=	ܐܠܐ ܐܢ
ὁ πατήρ	=	*al-ab*	=	ܐܒܐ
οὐδὲ	=	*wa-lā*	≠	ܐܦ ܠܐ ܠ
τὸν πατέρα	=	*al-ab*	=	ܐܒܐ
τις	=	*aḥad*	≠	ܐܢܫ

ἐπιγινώσκει	=	*yaʿrifu*	=	ܝܕܥ
εἰ μὴ	=	*illā*	=	ܐܠܐ ܐܢ
ὁ υἱὸς	=	*al-ibn*	=	ܒܪܐ

– (11:28) *yā ayyuhā al-taʿibīn al-laghibīn al-ḥāmilī al-aʿdāl al-thaqīla*. A literal rendering of πάντες οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι, in which the vocative marker *yā ayyuhā* translates the vocative πάντες οἱ (> ܟܠܟܘܢ). On the pairings *al-taʿibīn al-laghibīn* and *al-ḥāmilī al-aʿdāl al-thaqīla* see § 8 below.
– (11:28) *wa-anā urīḥukum*. The present-future *urīḥu* (*sic* V, Diat.) used in an emphatic construction (*wa-anā* = κἀγὼ) translates ἀναπαύσω (< future indicative of ἀναπαύω, "make/give rest"). This strategy may reflect a desire to distinguish it from the aphel imperfect *ʾanīḥ* of the cognate form (*unīḥu*) used by Sa72, B, and VB, the three translations from Greek originals, although there may well have been some interference from a Syriac text.
– (11:29) *iḥmilū āṣārī ʿalaykum*. This is a literal translation, except for a departure regarding the number of the direct object: the Arabic *āṣār* is plural, whereas the Greek and Syriac referents (ζυγόν/ܢܝܪ) are in the singular.
– (11:29) *fa-innakum satajidūna rāḥa li-anfusikum*. There is a word-for-word correspondence with the Greek and Syriac texts (καὶ εὑρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν / ܘܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܢܝܚܐ ܠܢܦܫܬܟܘܢ). The future *satajidūna* may be a rendering either of the future indicative εὑρήσετε or of the peal active participle ܡܫܟܚܝܢ. However, the direct object *rāḥa* (*sic* V, Diat.) appears to correspond to the accusative ἀνάπαυσιν; the translator opts not to use *niyāḥ*, the cognate of ܢܝܚܐ, which appears in Sa72, B, and VB perhaps as a result of Syriac interference.
– (11:30) *li-anna iṣrī sahl ṭayyib wa-ʿidlī khafīf*. A literal translation, though adding *sahl ṭayyib* to render χρηστὸς, which has the dual meaning of "easy" and "pleasant" (cf. Peshīṭtā ܒܣܝܡ). The translator uses *khafīf* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.) to translate the adjective ἐλαφρόν ("light") rather than ܩܠܝܠܐ which means "light" in the sense of "little, small (burden)," for which one might have expected the Arabic cognate *qalīl*, whose meaning is identical.

2.2 *Free Translations*

– (11:24) *anna Sadūm afḍal ilayhā min al-ṭumaʾnīna wa-l-daʿa yawm al-qiyāma*. This translation does not fully match the Greek and Syriac texts (ὅτι γῇ Σοδόμων ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως ἢ σοί > ܕܠܐܪܥܐ ܕܣܕܘܡ ܢܗܘܐ ܢܝܚ ܒܝܘܡܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ ܐܘ ܠܟܝ) in that it omits the noun γῇ/ܐܪܥܐ and introduces the elative construction *afḍal ilayhā min al-ṭumaʾnīna wa-l-daʿa* which—through *amplificatio* of the partitive construction—equates to the comparative adjective ἀνεκτότερον/ܢܝܚ. Interestingly, the translator has opted for the

clause *yawm al-qiyāma* ("the day of resurrection"), which does not correspond to ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως/ܒܝܘܡܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ ("on the day of judgement").

– (11:28) *halummū ilayya wa-aqbilū ya ayyuhā al-taʿibīn al-laghibīn al-ḥāmilī al-aʿdāl al-thaqīla wa-anā urīḥukum*. A free translation of δεῦτε πρός με πάντες οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι, κἀγὼ ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς (> ܬܘ ܠܘܬܝ ܟܠܟܘܢ ܠܐܝܢܐ ܘܫܩܝܠܝ ܡܘܒܠܐ ܘܐܢܐ ܐܢܝܚܟܘܢ), to which the translator has added the verbal construction *halummū-aqbilū* ("Come-draw near") as an interpretation of the imperative δεῦτε (cf. Peshīṭṭā ܬܘ). The coordinate clause with vocative marker οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι ("all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens"; Sa72 *ayyuh al-tabiʿīn kullukum al-muthaqqalīn*; B, VB *ayyuh al-matʿūbīn kullukum wa-l-muthaqqalīn*; V *al-matʿūbīn al-thaqīlī al-ḥaml*) is interpreted by the paraphrase *yā ayyuhā al-taʿibīn al-laghibīn al-ḥāmilī al-aʿdāl al-thaqīla*, which amplifies the present participle κοπιῶντες and the perfect participle πεφορτισμένοι through the influence of the Peshīṭṭā version ܟܠܟܘܢ ܠܐܝܢܐ ܘܫܩܝܠܝ ܡܘܒܠܐ, incorporating the emphatic adjective ܠܐܝܢܐ and the *status constructus* ܘܫܩܝܠܝ ܡܘܒܠܐ to give the noun paraphrase *al-taʿibīn al-laghibīn al-ḥāmilī al-aʿdāl al-thaqīla*. Diat. reads *halummū ilayya kullukum ayyuhā al-mutʿabūn wa-ḥāmilū al-athqāl*.

– (11:29) *innī sākin mutawāḍiʿ fī nafsī*. The translation "I am calm and humble in my soul" draws on the Greek and Syriac ὅτι πραΰς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ/ܕܢܝܚ ܐܢܐ ܘܡܟܝܟ ܐܢܐ ܒܠܒܝ, with interference from the possessive construction ܠܒܝ ("my heart," cf. τῇ καρδίᾳ, "the heart"), but does not follow either of the texts faithfully, since the Arabic translator has exchanged καρδία/ܠܒܐ for *nafs*. Sa72, B, V, and VB, following a Greek text, give *fa-innī/innanī sākin mutawāḍiʿ al-qalb* (though Sa72 adds a *wāw*: *wa-mutawāḍiʿ*, while VB has *ḥalīm*, "mild," instead of *sākin*). Diat., from a Syriac *Vorlage*, translates *fa-innī hādiʾ wa-mutawāḍiʿ bi-qalbī*.

2.3 *Three Alternative Translation Proposals*

– (11:21) *aw law kānat al-quwā allatī kānat fīkunna fī Ṣūr wa-Ṣaydān*, a comparative alternative for *law kāna bi-Ṣūr wa-Ṣaydān al-ʿajāʾib wa-l-āyāt allatī kānat fīkumā*.

– (11:21) *aw aẓunnuhum kānū yatūbūna bi-l-qiyām ʿalā al-musūḥ wa-l-ramād*, also with a comparative purpose, to account for the earlier proposition *idhan la-tāba ahluhā bi-ftirāsh al-musūḥ wa-l-ramād*.

– (11:24) *aw inna al-rāḥa takūnu li-ahl Sadūm yawm al-qiyāma afḍal minki*, a comparative alternative for *inna Sadūm yaṣilu ilayhā min al-ṭumaʾnīna wa-l-daʿa yawm al-qiyāma*, with the addition of *ahl* (cf. γῇ Σοδόμων/ܐܪܥܐ ܕܣܕܘܡ).

2.4 *Amplifying Construction*

– (11:22) *yaṣilu ilayhim min al-rāḥa yawm al-dīn afḍal* is an amplifying adaptation of ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως ἢ ὑμῖν/ܢܗܘܐ ܢܝܚ ܒܝܘܡܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ ܐܘ ܠܟܘܢ; Sa72 *takūnu fī rāḥa akthar minkum.*

2.5 *Shift of Word Order*

– (11:27) *qad naḥalanī abī al-ashyāʾ kullahā*, because the translator has exchanged the passive structure for an active structure (cf. πάντα μοι παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου/ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܐܫܬܠܡ ܠܝ ܡܢ ܐܒܝ) with a perfective aspectual marker. The equivalences, arranged vertically and numbered in order, run as follows:

	Ø	Ø	(1) *qad*
2	μοι παρεδόθη	ܐܫܬܠܡ ܠܝ	(2) *naḥalanī*
3	ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου	ܡܢ ܐܒܝ	(3) *abī*
1	πάντα	ܟܠ ܡܕܡ	(4) *al-ashyāʾ kullahā*

– (11:27) *wa-lā aḥad yaʿrifu al-ab illā al-ibn*. A switch in word order (οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα τις ἐπιγινώσκει > ܐܦ ܠܐ ܠܐܒܐ ܐܢܫ ܝܕܥ ≠ *wa-lā aḥad yaʿrifu al-ab*), thus departing from the chiastic syntax of the Greek and Syriac texts.

2.6 *Additions*

– (11:20) *Īsūʿ* found in the Peshīṭtā (ܝܫܘܥ) also appears in a series of Greek manuscripts: C K L N W Θ $f^{1,13}$ 565. 579. 892 pm g^1 h vg^{mss} sy sa^{mss}, which give ὁ Ἰησοῦς on which the *lectio Īsūʿ* draws (cf. § 1).

– (11:20) *fa-lam yatub ahluhā* ("because their people did not repent") < ὅτι οὐ μετενόησαν (> ܘܠܐ ܬܒܘ) interpreting the 3rd p. pl. of μετενόησαν as *ahluhā* ("their people" [i.e., inhabitants of the cities]).

– (11:21) *fa-qāla ʿinda dhālika* is not found in Greek, but appears in the Peshīṭtā: ܘܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ.

– (11:22) *inna ahl Ṣūr wa-Ṣaydān* adds *ahl* in the noun proposition with a direct object function not found in the Greek and Syriac texts: Τύρῳ καὶ Σιδῶνι / ܕܠܨܘܪ ܘܠܨܝܕܢ (Sa72 *inna Ṣūr wa-Ṣaydā*).

– (11:23) *irtafaʿti bi-fakhriki*, an addition used to convey the sense of ὑψωθήσῃ (ὑψόω, "to raise on high, to exalt"); if the Arab translator had opted to follow the Syriac text, rather than the ettaphal ܐܬܬܪܝܡܬܝ ("to become great, to be exalted") it would have had to be the aphel form ܐܪܝܡ ("to raise on high, to exalt").

– (11:23) *ilā yawm al-nās hādhā* (Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat. *ḥattā*/*ilā al-yawm*) is a rendering of μέχρι τῆς σήμερον (> ܥܕܡܐ ܠܝܘܡܢܐ, "until today") but with the addition of *nās* ("until this day of the people").

– (11:24) *inna al-rāḥa takūnu li-ahl Sadūm yawm al-qiyāma afḍal minki*, a translation of ὅτι γῇ Σοδόμων ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως ἢ σοί (> ܕܠܐܪܥܐ ܕܣܕܘܡ ܢܗܘܐ ܢܝܚ ܒܝܘܡܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ ܐܘ ܠܟܝ) including *ahl* in place of γῇ/ ܐܪܥܐ ("land"). Here, the Arabic texts offer two versions:
  a) Sa72, V, VB: *inna al-rāḥa takūnu li-Sadūm yawm al-daynūna akthar minhā laki*, and
  b) V: *arḍ Sadūm rāḥa yawm al-dīn*; Diat. *inna arḍ Sadūm yakūnu hudūʾ fī yawm al-ḥukm*.
– (11:25) *hādhihi al-umūr* adds the pl. *al-umūr* rather than the demonstrative pronoun ταῦτα/ܗܠܝܢ found in the Greek and Syriac texts (Sa72 *hādhā*, B, VB *hādhā*; V *hādhihi*).
– (11:27) *aḥabba*, the causative form corresponding to βούληται, although it is actually an addition through separation from *shāʾ* due to interference from the peal perfect ܨܒܐ ("to will, to desire").

2.7 *Omissions*

– (11:21) πάλαι ("long ago") due to interference from the Syriac text, where it does not appear in Syriac. Sa72 *qad kānū qadīman*; V *qadīman*.
– (11:24) γῇ Σοδόμων/ܐܪܥܐ ܕܣܕܘܡ, omitting the first element of the clause. Unlike V and Diat., which offer *arḍ Sadūm*, both Sa72 and Vat. Ar. 13 omit γῇ/ܐܪܥܐ: *Sadūm*.
– (11:26) ἔμπροσθεν/ܩܕܡ, incorporated by B, V, VB: *quddāmaka*; V: *amāmaka*.

2.8 *Doublet Terms*

– (11:21) *al-ʿajāʾib wa-l-āyāt* is a separation of the clause αἱ δυνάμεις/ܚܝܠܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ("the/those powers") with the idea of stressing the semantic spectrum of δύναμις[16] (> ܚܝܠܐ).
– (11:23) *tasfulīna wa-tahbuṭīna*, a verb construction which translates either καταβήσῃ (< καταβαίνω, "to go down, to descend," either from the sky or from higher land) or the ethpali passive imperf. ܬܬܚܬܝܢ ("to be brought down").
– (11:25) *al-ḥukamāʾ wa-l-fuqahāʾ al-fuhamāʾ* renders the coordinate noun clause σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν (cf. ܚܟܝܡܐ ܘܣܟܘܠܬܢܐ), where *fuqahāʾ* acts as a complementary term.
– (11:25) *al-atfāl wa-l-wildān*. The doublet *atfāl-wildān* is unlikely to be a translation of νηπίοις and ܝܠܕܐ, but rather the result of a strategy aimed at

16 Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1999), §§ 37.61, 74.1, 76.1.

semantically covering a wider age range than that given by the two Arabic terms on their own, which the Syriac text does not convey.[17]

- (11:28) *halummū-aqbilū* corresponds to the imperative δεῦτε (> ܬܘ).
- (11:28) *al-taʿibīn al-laghibīn* / *al-ḥāmilī al-aʿdāl al-thaqīla*. These two doublets are used to render the coordinate clause with vocative marker οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι ("you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens") as *yā ayyuhā al-taʿibīn al-laghibīn al-ḥāmilī al-aʿdāl al-thaqīla* amplifying the present participle κοπιῶντες and the perfect participle πεφορτισμένοι by using the Syriac ܟܠܟܘܢ ܠܐܝܐ ܘܫܩܝܠܝ ܡܘܒܠܐ, through interference of the emphatic adjective ܠܐܝܐ and the *status constructus* ܫܩܝܠܝ ܡܘܒܠܐ.
- (11:29) *taʿallamū minnī–tashabbahū bī* translates μάθετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ (> ܐܠܦܘ ܡܢܝ). With the verb μανθάνω Jesus urges obedience to the Torah, but through his own definitive interpretation. The doublet expresses the dual idea of following the Torah through Jesus' own interpretation of it.
- (11:30) *sahl ṭayyib* translates χρηστός, with the dual meaning of "easy" and "pleasant"[18] (cf. Peshīṭtā ܒܣܝܡ).

2.9 *Variant*

- (11:24) *ahl Sadūm* < γῇ Σοδόμων/ ܐܪܥܐ ܕܣܕܘܡ = V, Diat.: *arḍ Sadūm*; Sa72 *Sadūm*.

2.10 *Minor Interpretations*

- (11:20) *jarāʾiḥahu al-kathīra*; the feminine plural superlative adjective πλεῖσται (> Sa72, B, V, VB *akthar quwwātihi*) is interpreted as a qualifying adjective, *kathīra*, due to the influence of ܚܝܠܘܗܝ ܣܓܝܐܐ.
- (11:21) *idhan la-tāba ahluhā bi-ftirāsh al-musūḥ wa-l-ramād* is a paraphrastic interpretation of ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῷ/ ܒܣܩܐ ܘܒܩܛܡܐ ("in sackcloth and ashes").

2.11 *Lexicon*

2.11.1 Verbs

- (11:20) *badaʾa* (*sic* B, VB, Diat.; V omit.) = aorist indicative ἤρξατο (> perfect pael ܫܪܝ).

17 On νήπιος, see Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, § 9.43; on ܛܠܝܐ "infans, parvulus," see Robert Payne Smith, *Thesaurus syriacus*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879–1901), 1:1596.

18 Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, §§ 22.40, 88.9, 88.10, 88.68.

– (11:20) *yuʿayyir* (*sic* B, VB; cf. V *yughayyir*; Sa72 *yuʿayyir*; Diat. *fī taqrīʿ*) = present infinitive ὀνειδίζειν (> infinitive pael ܠܡܚܣܕܘ).
– (11:20) *aẓhara* (Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat. *kānat*/*kāna*) = aorist indicative ἐγένοντο (> perfect peal ܗܘܘ).
– (11:20) *yatub* (Sa72, B, V, VB *yatūbū*; Diat. *tatub*) = aorist indicative μετενόησαν (> perfect peal ܬܒܘ). Cf. below (11:21) *yatūbūna*.
– (11:21) *qāla* (V *yaqūl*; Sa72, B, VB omit.) = perfect peal ܐܡܪ.
– (11:21) *kāna* (Sa72, B, VB *kānat*; V *kunna*) = aorist indicative ἐγένοντο (> perfect peal ܗܘܘ).
– (11:21) *kānat* (*sic* Sa72, B, VB; V *kunna*) = aorist participle γενόμεναι (> perfect peal ܗܘܘ).
– (11:21) *yatūbūna* (*sic* V; Sa72, B, VB *tābū*) = aorist indicative μετενόησαν (> perfect peal ܬܒܘ). Cf. above (11:20) *yatub*.
– (11:22) *aqūlu* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = present indicative λέγω (> active participle ܐܡܪ). Cf. below (11:24) *aqūlu*.
– (11:23) *irtafaʿti bi-fakhriki* (Sa72, B, V, VB *irtafaʿti*) = future indicative ὑψωθήσῃ / perfect ettaphal ܐܬܬܪܝܡܬܝ.
– (11:23) *tasfulīna wa-tahbuṭīna* (Sa72 *tahbuṭī*; V *sa-tahbuṭu*; B, VB omit.) = future indicative καταβήσῃ / imperfect passive ethpali ܬܬܚܬܝܢ.
– (11:23) *kāna* (*sic* B, V, VB; Sa72 *kānat*) = aorist indicative ἐγενήθησαν (> perfect peal ܗܘܘ).
– (11:23) *kānat* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = aorist participle γενόμεναι (> ܗܘܘ).
– (11:23) *kānat* (*qāʾima thābita*) (Sa72, B, V, VB omit.) = aorist indicative ἔμεινεν (> perfect peal ܗܘܬ).
– (11:24) *aqūlu* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = λέγω (present indicative active) / active participle ܐܡܪ. Cf. above (11:22) *aqūlu*.
– (11:24) *takūnu* (*sic* Sa72, B, VB; V *tajid*) = future indicative ἔσται (> imperfective peal ܢܗܘܐ).
– (11:25) *ajāba* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = aorist participle passive ἀποκριθεὶς (> perfect peal ܥܢܐ).
– (11:25) *qāla* (*sic* V; Sa72, B, VB *qāʾilan*) = aorist indicative active εἶπεν / perfect peal ܐܡܪ
– (11:25) *ashkur* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB *aʿtarifu*) = present indicative middle ἐξομολογοῦμαι (> active participle aphel ܡܘܕܐ ܐܢܐ).
– (11:25) *akhfayta* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = aorist indicative active ἔκρυψας (> perfect pael ܟܣܝܬ).
– (11:25) *aʿlanta* (Sa72, B, VB *kashafta*; V *aẓhara*) = aorist indicative ἀπεκάλυψας (> perfect peal ܓܠܝܬ).
– (11:26) *kānat* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = aorist indicative ἐγένετο (> perfect peal ܗܘܐ).

– (11:27) *naḥala* (Sa72, V *uslima*; B, VB *dufiʿa*) = aorist indicative passive παρεδόθη (> perfect ethpeel ܐܫܬܠܡ).
– (11:27) *laysa* (*yaʿrifu*) (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = present indicative active ἐπιγινώσκει (> ܠܐ ܝܕܥ).
– (11:27) *yuṭliʿu* (Sa72 *kashafa*; B, V, VB *yakshifu*) = aorist infinitive ἀποκαλύψαι (> imperfect peal ܢܓܠܐ).
– (11:27) *shāʾ* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = present subjunctive βούληται (> active participle peal ܨܒܐ).
– (11:27) *aḥabba* (Sa72, B, V, VB omit.) = present subjunctive βούληται (> active participle peal ܨܒܐ).
– (11:28) *halummū-aqbilū* (Sa72, B, V, VB *taʿālaw*) = imperative δεῦτε (> imperative peal ܬܘ).
– (11:28) *urīḥu* (*sic* V, Diat.; Sa72, B, VB *unīḥu*) = future indicative ἀναπαύσω (> imperfect aphel ܐܢܝܚ).
– (11:29) *iḥmilū* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.) = aorist imperative ἄρατε (> imperative peal ܥܩܘܠܘ).
– (11:29) *taʿallamū–tashabbahū* (Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat. *taʿallamū*) < aorist imperative μάθετε (> imperative peal ܠܦܘ).
– (11:29) *sa-tajidūna* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB; Diat. *tajidūna*) = future indicative εὑρήσετε (> active participle peal ܡܥܫܟܚܝܢ).

2.11.2 Expressions

– (11:22) *yawm al-dīn* (*sic* V, Diat.; Sa72, B, VB *yawm al-daynūna*) = ܝܘܡܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ (< ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως).
– (11:23) *qāʾima thābita* (Sa72, B, VB *la-makathat*; V *thabatat*; Diat. *thābita*) = ἔμεινεν ἂν (> ܩܝܡܐ).
– (11:23) *yawm al-nās hādhā* (Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat. *al-yawm*) ≠ μέχρι τῆς σήμερον (> ܥܕܡܐ ܠܝܘܡܢܐ).
– (11:24) *yawm al-qiyāma* (Sa72, B, VB *yawm al-daynūna*; V *yawm al-dīn*; Diat. *yawm al-ḥukm*) ≠ ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως/ܒܝܘܡܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ.
– (11:24) *yaṣilu ilayhā min* (Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat. omit.) ≠ ἀνεκτότερον … ἢ/.. ܢܝܚ ܐܘ.
– (11:24) *afḍal minki* (B, VB *akthar minhā laki*; V *akthar minki*) ≠ ἀνεκτότερον … ἢ σοί /ܢܝܚ ... ܐܘ ܠܟܝ.
– (11:25) *dhālika al-zamān* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ/ܒܗܘ ܙܒܢܐ.
– (11:25) *rabb al-samāwāt wa-l-arḍ* (*sic* Sa72; B, V, VB *rabb al-samāʾ wa-l-arḍ*) ≠ κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς/ܡܪܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܘܕܐܪܥܐ, without correspondence between the plural *samāwāt* and the singular Greek form οὐρανοῦ, but from Syriac pl. ܫܡܝܐ.

– (11:25) *hādhihi al-umūr* (Sa72, B, VB *hādhā*; V *hādhihi*) = demonstrative pronoun ταῦτα/ܗܠܝܢ.
– (11:25–26) *yā abati* ("Daddy!"), vocative expression as a result of translating the vocative πάτερ/ὁ πατήρ (< אבא) through the influence of Syriac ܐܒܝ ("my father!").

2.11.3 Nouns

– (11:20) *madāʾin* (Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat. *mudun*) = πόλεις/ܡܕܝܢܬܐ.
– (11:20) *jarāʾiḥ* (Sa72, V, VB *quwwāt*) = δυνάμεις (> ܚܝܠܘܗܝ).
– (11:21) *al-ajāʾib wa-l-āyāt* = δυνάμεις/ܚܝܠܐ.
– (11:21) *quwan* (Sa72, B, V, VB *quwwāt*; Diat. *quwan*) = δυνάμεις/ܚܝܠܐ.
– (11:21) *iftirāsh al-musūḥ* = σάκκῳ/ ܣܩܐ.
– (11:21) *musūḥ* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB; Diat. *misḥ*) = σάκκῳ/ܣܩܐ.
– (11:21) *ramād* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.) = σποδῷ/ܩܛܡܐ.
– (11:22) *rāḥa* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = ἀνεκτότερον/ܢܝܚ.
– (11:23) *al-hāwiya* (*sic* Diat.) This Qurʾānic technical term denoting hell[19] is preferred to other loanwords (Sa72, B, V, VB *al-jaḥīm*)[20] to translate the Greek ᾅδης rather than the Syriac loanword (< שְׁאוֹל), which would have required other options such as *jahannam* (Mt 5:29–30; 23:33 in Sa72, V) or indeed *shiyūl*.
– (11:23) *al-quwā* (Diat. *al-jarāʾiḥ*; Sa72, B, V, VB *al-quwwāt*) = αἱ δυνάμεις ("the powers" > ܚܝܠܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ, "those powers").
– (11:24) *al-ṭumaʾnīna wa-l-daʿa* (Sa72, B, V, VB *al-rāḥa*; Diat. *hudūʾ*) = ἀνεκτότερον (> ܢܝܚ).
– (11:24) *al-rāḥa*, though coinciding in meaning with ܢܝܚ ("(more) tranquil") translates ἀνεκτότερον, as confirmed by Sa72, B, V, VB: *al-rāḥa*.
– (11:25) *al-zamān* (*sic* B, V, VB) = τῷ καιρῷ/ܙܒܢܐ.
– (11:25) *al-ḥukamāʾ* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = σοφῶν/ܚܟܝܡܐ.[21]
– (11:25) *al-fuqahāʾ* = omit. Cf. § 8.
– (11:25) *al-fuhamāʾ* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = συνετῶν/ܣܟܘܠܬܢܐ.[22]
– (11:25) *al-aṭfāl wa-l-wildān* (Sa72, B, V, VB *al-aṭfāl*) = νηπίοις/ܝܠܕܐ. Cf. § 8.

19 Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 285–286.
20 Michael Carter, "Foreign Vocabulary," in *The Blackwell Companion to the Qurʾān*, ed. Andrew Rippin (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 120–139, here 133. Cf. Michael Sells, "A Literary Approach to the Hymnic Sūras of the Qurʾān: Spirit, Gender and Aural Intertextuality," in *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qurʾān*, ed. Issa J. Boullata (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 3–25, here 21–22.
21 Louis Costaz, *Dictionnaire syriaque-français* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 2002), 104a.
22 Costaz, *Dictionnaire*, 228b.

- (11:26) *mashī'a* (Sa72; B, V, VB *masarra*) = εὐδοκία/ܨܒܝܢܐ.
- (11:27) *ab* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = πατρός/ܐܒܐ.
- (11:27) *ashyā'* (Sa72, B, V, VB omit.) = πάντα/ܟܠܡ.
- (11:27) *ibn* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = υἱὸν/ܒܪܐ.
- (11:28) *al-taʿibīn al-laghibīn* (Sa72 *al-taʿibīn*; B, V, VB *al-matʿūbīn*; Diat. *al-mutʿabūn*) = ܠܐܝ̈ܐ (< κοπιῶντες).
- (11:28) *al-ḥāmilī al-aʿdāl al-thaqīla* (Sa72, B, VB *al-muthaqqalīn*; V *al-thaqīlī al-ḥaml*; Diat. *ḥāmilū al-athqāl*) = ܘܫܩܝ̈ܠܝ ܡܘܒ̈ܠܐ (< πεφορτισμένοι).
- (11:29) *āṣār* (Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat. *nīrah/nīr*) = ζυγόν/ܢܝܪ.
- (11:29) *sākin* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB; Diat. *hādi'*) = πραΰς/ܢܝܚ.
- (11:29) *mutawāḍiʿ* (*sic* Sa72, B, VB, Diat.) = ταπεινὸς/ܡܟܝܟ.
- (11:29) *nafs* (Sa72, B, V, VB *al-qalb*; Diat. *bi-qalbī*) = καρδίᾳ/ܠܒ.
- (11:29) *rāḥa* (*sic* V, Diat.; Sa72, B, VB *niyāḥ*) = ἀνάπαυσιν/ܢܝܚܐ.
- (11:29) *anfus* (*sic* Sa72, B, VB; V, Diat. *nufūs*) = ψυχαῖς/ܠܢܦܫܬ̈ܟܘܢ.
- (11:30) *aṣr* (Sa72, B, V, VB *nīrah/nīrā/nīr*) = ζυγός/ܢܝܪ.
- (11:30) *ʿidl* (Sa72, B, VB *ḥuzma*; V *ḥaml*; Diat. *maḥmil*) = φορτίον/ܡܘܒܠܝ.
- (11:30) *khafīf* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.) = ἐλαφρόν ("light") rather than ܩܠܝܠܐ which means "light" in the sense of "little, small (burden)" for which one might have expected the Arabic cognate *qalīl*, whose meaning is identical.

2.11.4 Proper Names

- (11:20) *Īsūʿ* (*sic* Diat.; Sa72, B, V, VB omit.) = ὁ Ἰησοῦς (cf. Peshīṭtā ܝܫܘܥ).
- (11:25) *Yasūʿ* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = ܝܫܘܥ (< ὁ Ἰησοῦς).

2.11.5 Place Names

- (11:21) *Kūrazayn* (*sic* V, Diat.; Sa72, B, VB *Kurāzayn*) = Χοραζείν/ܟܘܪܙܝܢ.
- (11:21) *Bayt Ṣayādhā* (B, V, VB, Diat. *Bayt Ṣaydā*) = Βηθσαϊδά/ܒܝܬ ܨܝܕܐ.
- (11:21–22) *Ṣūr* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.) = ܨܘܪ (< צוֹר > Τύρος).
- (11:21–22) *Ṣaydān* (Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat. *Ṣaydā*) = ܨܝܕܢ (< צִידוֹן/צִידֹן > Σιδών).
- (11:23) *Kafrat Anḥum* (Sa72, B, VB *Kafratnaḥūm*; V, Diat. *Kafr Nāḥūm*) = ܟܦܪܢܚܘܡ (< כְּפַר נַחוּם > Καφαρναούμ).
- (11:23–24) *Sadūm* (*sic* Sa72, V, Diat.; B, VB *Sadhum*) = ܣܕܘܡ (< סְדוֹם > Σόδομα).

2.11.6 Particles

- (11:20) *ʿinda dhālika* (Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.: *ḥīna'idhin*) = τότε/ ܗܝܕܝܢ.
- (11:20) *lam* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.) = οὐ/ ܠܐ.
- (11:21) *wayl* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.) = οὐαί/ܘܝ.
- (11:21) *an law* = ὅτι εἰ/ܕܐܠܘ.
- (11:22) *inna* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.) = omit./ܕ.
- (11:23) *law* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB; Diat.) < εἰ/ܐܠܘ.

– (11:23) *idhā* (*kānat qā'ima thābita*) (Sa72, B, V, VB *idhan*; Diat. omit.) = ἄν (Peshīṭṭā omit.).
– (11:24) *lakinnī* (Sa72, B, VB *bal*; V, Diat.: omit.) = πλὴν/ܒܪܡ.
– (11:24) *inna* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB, Diat.) = ὅτι/ܕ.
– (11:25) *idh* (Sa72, B, VB: *inna*; V *li-annaka*) = ὅτι/ܕ.
– (11:26) *na'am* (*sic* V; Sa72, B, VB: omit.) = ναί/ܐܝ.
– (11:26) *hākadhā* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = (11:26) ὅτι οὕτως/ܗܟܢܐ.
– (11:27) *aḥad* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = οὐδείς/τις (cf. Peshīṭṭā ܓܒܪ).
– (11:27) *kull* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = πάντα/ܟܠ.
– (11:27) *mā khalā* (Sa72, B, V, VB *illā*) = εἰ μὴ/ܐܢ ܠܐ.
– (11:27) *illā* (*sic* Sa72, B, V, VB) = εἰ μὴ/ܐܢ ܠܐ.
– (11:27) *dhālika* (Sa72, B, V, VB: omit.) = Ø

3 Conclusions

As this analysis shows, the translator of Vat. Ar. 13 uses a whole range of strategies to deal with syntactic issues. In the thirteen cases where he opts for a literal translation, this cannot properly be deemed a strategy, but rather a solution imposed by the original text, leaving the translator with no alternative. The three cases of free translation do not represent a complete departure from the original, but rather a modulation achieved through various strategies: addition, omission, or modification of the elements as they appear in the original texts on which the translator draws.

In three cases, however, the translator offers alternative translations for a single unit, introduced syntactically by the adversative conjunction *aw* (< ἤ > ܐܘ),[23] clearly for purposes of comparison. The use, on one occasion, of an amplifying construction represents a not entirely successful attempt to retain the word order of the original. By contrast, the two shifts in word order are dictated by the need to respect the rules of classical Arabic. This is achieved in two ways: by changing the original passive structure into an active structure and by departing from the chiastic syntax of the original texts.

Addition is a commonly used strategy, found on nine occasions. It consists in the inclusion of a term either to represent a manuscript translation (11:20), to provide an extra word or phrase (11:20, 11:21, 11:22, 11:23, and 11:25) or to replace another term (11:24). The three cases of omission (11:21, 11:24, and 11:26)

23 Jeffrey Paul Lyon, *Syriac Gospel Translations: A Comparison of the Language and Translation Method Used in the Old Syriac, the Diatessaron, and the Peshitto* (Leuven: Peeters, 1994), 117–118.

reflect the translator's desire to retain every informative feature—however minimal—of the original text. Doublet terms are used eight times: rather than a strategy, this can be regarded as a technique employed by the translator of Vat. Ar. 13 whenever the semantic spectrum of the source-language term can only be fully conveyed by more than one term in Arabic.

The single variant in the fragment (11:24) reflects the translator's wish to make clear that Jesus' reproaches, and above all the imminent punishment which he compares to that suffered by the people of Sodom, were directed at the inhabitants of the cities. The two minor interpretations represent either a negligible departure from the original text (11:20)—not sufficient to constitute a variant—or an attempt to enhance the general sense of a lexical unit or phrase (11:21).

With regard to lexical issues, apart from the switch from passive to active voice (e.g., 11:27 *naḥala*), the translator systematically opts to retain the aspectual use of the thirty-five verbs (including two doublet terms) as found in the Greek source-text or when there is interference from the Syriac.

Of the ten expressions used, one is drawn directly from the Syriac (11:22), one is due to interference (11:25–26), and three are found both in the Greek and the Syriac texts (11:23 and 11:25bis). The remaining five are not found either in the Greek or the Syriac, and represent a redundant construction (11:24), an addition (11:23 and 11:24), the replacement of one of the elements (11:25), or a piece of free interpretation (11:24 *yawm al-qiyāma*). The thirty-two nouns (six of which are in doublet form) include one omission (11:25), twenty-two literal renderings of both the Greek and the Syriac, seven translations from the Greek, and two from the Syriac.

The personal name Jesus is used twice: even though both forms are found in Syriac (ܝܫܘܥ/ܐܝܫܘܥ), the translator seems to draw on the Greek in one case (11:20) and on the Syriac in the other (11:25). For the six toponyms, the Syriac forms are generally followed, as was usual amongst Christian Arabic translators. For the seventeen particles—except where they are omitted—there is a full match between Arabic, Greek, and Syriac.

In view of the foregoing, it may be concluded that the translator of Vat. Ar. 13 took the sentence or phrase of the Greek text as his translation unit, but constantly compared it to a Syriac text. His habitual insistence on a strategy of formal equivalence (e.g., 11:22 *yawm al-dīn* < ܝܘܡܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ), both in content and in form, led him to eschew—except in a few cases—dynamic equivalence, modulation (e.g., *allatī irtafaʿti bi-fakhriki* < μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθήσῃ > ܗܝ ܕܥܕܡܐ ܠܫܡܝܐ ܐܬܬܪܝܡܬܝ), and transposition (e.g., 11:24 *yawm al-qiyāma* ≠ ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως/ܒܝܘܡܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ).

Appendix: Edition and Translation of the Arabic Version of Matthew 11:20–30

The text contains a number of features characteristic of the medieval Christian Arabic manuscript tradition. The copyist has used the so-called late or transitional *kūfī* script, widely found in other copies not only from Mār Sābā but also from other *scriptoria*, including that of the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai. The script used in the oldest portion of Vat. Ar. 13 is similar to that of the *Florilegium monasticum* Vat. ar. 71 (dated to 885), also from Mār Sābā.[24] The text contains numerous graphematic errors, as well as defects in vowel markings, suprasegmental phonemes, and consonantal diacritical points.[25]

In editing the fragment, we have transcribed the text as it appears in the manuscript, retaining even the morphology of the consonants lacking diacritical points. The translation is accompanied by Greek liturgical marks indicating end (τέλος) and the beginning (ἀρχή) of the respective pericopes, τε̂ and αρχ, in 11:24–25 as indicated in the edition.

English translation	Edition	Verses
Then Jesus began to reproach the cities in which he had performed his many miracles, because their people did not repent.	عند ذلك بدا ايسوع ان يعير المداس اليي اظهر فيها جرايحه الكثيره فلم يتب اهلها	11:20
And then he said: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon there appeared the miracles and signs which appeared in you—or: if the powers shown in you had been shown in Tyre and Sidon—then its people would have repented, by spreading sackcloth and ashes—	فمال عند ذلك الويل لك يا كورزين والويل لك يا بيت صياذا ان لو كان بصور وصيدان العجايب والايات التي كانت فيكما او لو كانت القوى التي كانت	

24 Eugène Tisserant, *Specimina codicum orientalium* (Bonn: A. Marcus & E. Weber, 1914), XXXVIII–XXXIX (No. 54).

25 Joshua Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic Based Mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium*, 3 vols. (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1966–1967), 122–125, §§ 25–26.3.2.

(*cont.*)

English translation	Edition	Verses
or: I believe they would have repented by standing upon sackcloth and ashes.	فيكن في صور وصيدان اذن لتاب اهلها باقتراش المسوح والرماد او اظنهم كانوا يتوبون بالقيام على المسوح والرماد	11:21
But I tell you that on the day of judgement more comfort will come to the people of Tyre and Sidon [than to you].	ولكنى اقول لكم ان اهل صور وصيدان يصل اليهم من الراحة يوم الدين افضل	11:22
And you, Capernaum, which have been lifted up to heaven in your pride, you will be brought down and will fall into the abyss. For if in Sodom had been shown the powers shown in you, it would have remained standing and firm until this day of the people.	وانت يا كفره انحم التي اربفعت بفخرك الى السما سفلن وتهبطين الى الهاويه لانه لو كان بسدوم القوى التي كانت فيك اذا لكانت قايمه ثابته الى يوم الناس هذا	11:23
But I tell you that on the day of judgment more calm and tranquility will come to Sodom—or: that the calm of the people of Sodom on the day of resurrection will be greater than yours."	ولكنى اقول لك ان سدوم يصل اليها من الطمانينه والدعه يوم القيامه او ان الراحة تكون لاهل سدوم يوم القيامه افضل منك //	11:24
At that time Jesus answered and then said, "I thank you, my Father, Lord of the heavens and the earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise, the intelligent, and the sagacious and have revealed them to infants and children;	في ذلك الزمان اجاب يسوع عند ذلك τε̂ وقال اشكر لك يابت رب αρχ السماوات والارض اذ اخفيت هذه الامور عن الحكما والفهما الفهما واعلنتها للاطفال والولدان	11:25
yes, my Father, so was your will.	نعم يابت ها كذا كانت مسيتك //	11:26

(*cont.*)

English translation	Edition	Verses
My Father has handed over to me all things; no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son; and the Son teaches and reveals this to whomever he wishes and desires.	قد نحلى ابى الاشيا كلها ليس احد يعرف الابن ما خلا الاب ولا احد يعرف الاب الا الابن وبعلم الابن ويطلع ذلك لمن شا واحب	11:27
Come to me and approach, you who are tired and weary, and are carrying heavy burdens, and I shall give you rest.	هلموا الي واقبلوا يا ايها التعبين اللغيين الحاملى الاعدال الثقيله وانا اريحكم	11:28
Take my burdens upon you, learn from me, and imitate me; for I am calm and humble in my soul, and you will find rest for your souls.	احملوا اصاري عليكم وبعلموا منى وسبهوا نى[26] انى ساكن متواضع في نفسى فانكم ستجدون راحه لانفسكم	11:29
For my burden is easy and good, and my load is light."	لان اصرى سهل طب وعدلى خفيف	11:30

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26 So in the manuscript. This is a scribal mistake for *wa-tashabbahū bī*, "and imitate me."

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CHAPTER 4

Flawed Biblical Translations into Arabic and How to Correct Them: a Copt and a Jew Study Saadiah's *Tafsīr*

Ronny Vollandt

1 Introduction

Medieval Islamicate society included thriving Jewish and Christian communities that maintained their confessional coherence.[1] Muslim rule shaped the intellectual, demographic, and economic conditions in which they lived. These communities exhibited various forms of interactions in the realms of political, economic, and intellectual history that imply mutual, and at times, quite divers and not only peaceful, entanglements. Previous research, however, has tended to concentrate on the relations between Jews or Christians and the Muslim rulers.[2] Located on the intersection of Jewish or Eastern-Christian and Muslim Studies, the axis of academic observation is vertical, hegemonial as it were, between rulers and subjects. The interaction between Jews and Christians, along the horizontal axis, remains notably unexplored.[3]

The present contribution looks at one nexus of Jewish-Christian interaction in Ayyūbid Egypt, in the year 1242 CE. Its protagonists were two scholars, a Copt and a Jew, both of them readily identifiable.[4] In this close examination of what

1 Walid Saleh and Gregor Schwarb, whom I want to thank here, have been my closest interlocutors in various stages of this research. Ali Rida Rizq suggested valuable corrections to the Arabic text.

2 Compare for example the review article by Lena Salaymeh, "Between Scholarship and Polemic in Judeo-Islamic Studies," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 24 (2013): 407–418.

3 With the exception of polemic literature, of course. On this see: Simone Rosenkranz, *Die jüdisch-christliche Auseinandersetzung unter islamischer Herrschaft, 7.–10. Jahrhundert* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), which contains a full bibliography that requires no repetition here.

4 I have mentioned this scholarly collaboration in previous publications; e.g., Ronny Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch. A Comparative Study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 9–11; idem, "Coptic Hebraists in the Middle Ages? On the Transmission of Sa'adiah's Tafsīr" [Hebrew], *Tarbiẓ* 83 (2015): 71–86; idem, "From the Desks of a Coptic-Muslim Workshop: Paris, BNF, MS Ar. 1 and the Large-scale Production of Luxurious Arabic Bibles in Early Ottoman Cairo," in *Patronage, Production, and Transmission of Texts in Medieval and Early Modern Jewish Cultures*, ed. E. Alfonso and J. Decter (Turnhout: Bre-

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appears to have been the written documentation of a series of regular meetings, I will show that the Ayyūbid period fostered scholarly contacts between members of different faiths. Jews, Christians, and Muslims lived in closest proximity, were business partners, and even owned houses jointly. This everyday social correlation was echoed in scholarly exchanges, as we shall see.

"Christians and Jews, generally speaking, likewise appear to have had no grounds for complaint against the dynasty." This is how Claude Cahen described the state of non-Muslims under Ayyūbid rule (1171–1260 / 567–648).[5] The Ayyūbids continued, at least in part, the favorable treatment that Jews enjoyed under the last Fāṭimids. In Fāṭimid times, Egyptian Jews and their Coptic neighbors (on whom I will focus below) had benefited from a stable regime that appointed some of them to official positions, as scribes, tax collectors, and notaries, up to the highest levels of office, including the vizierate. It was rare for the Fāṭimid and Ayyūbid states to intervene in non-Muslim matters, unless invited to do so. Cyril III ibn Laqlaq's appointment as the seventy-fifth patriarch of the Church of Alexandria (1235), against the will of the community and thanks to the intervention of the Ayyūbid ruler al-Kāmil in support of his leadership, is probably the best example thereof.

The Ayyūbid period was not one of great prosperity, neither economically nor demographically. There was a sharp decrease in the population in Egypt after a disastrous famine in 1201–1202, and Jewish, Christian, and Muslim sources alike report recurrent shortages of grain and insufficient annual floods by the Nile.[6] Epidemics in 1217 and 1235–1236 further reduced the population.[7] The establishment of the *iqtāʿ* system of agricultural allotments leased to notables, in return for a fixed payment, along with other restrictive mercantile policies, resulted in a socioeconomic decline that was felt strongly by the Jewish and Coptic communities. Furthermore, various texts describe greater legal stringencies: the discriminatory dress code appears to have been enforced on

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pols, 2014), 231–265. There I announced an edition and comprehensive discussion of the main source, which I now present to the honorable addressee of the Festschrift.

5 Claude Cahen, "Ayyūbids," in *EI2*, 1:769–807.

6 E.g., Sawīrus Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church, Known as the History of the Holy Church*, trans. and annot. Antoine Khater and O.H.E. Burmester (Cairo: Société d'Archéologie Copte, 1974), vol. 3.2, 213 and vol. 4.1, 148; al-Maqrīzī, *A History of the Ayyubid Sultans of Egypt*, trans. R.J.C. Broadhurst (Boston: Twayne, 1980), 62, 80, and 115. For the reflection of these calamities in the Cairo Genizah, see Shlomo Dov Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, 6 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967–1988), 2:111 and 141; 4:124 and 239; 5:72 and 113–116.

7 See: Boaz Shoshan, "Notes sur les épidémies de peste en Égypte," *Annales de démographie historique* 1 (1981): 387–404; Michael Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 221 and 224.

occasion and fewer exemptions from the *jizya*-taxation were granted.[8] Despite these hardships, the Fāṭimid toleration largely prevailed under the Ayyūbids as well.

On the intellectual front, by contrast, the Coptic Church flourished under the Ayyūbids and reached an unparalleled literary and cultural level that lasted until the turmoil of the disintegration of the Ayyūbid dynasty and its replacement by the Baḥrī Mamluks. Scholars have called this period the "Coptic Renaissance."[9] The works by members of the al-ʿAssāl family on jurisprudence, canon law, theology, philosophy, and linguistics, composed in Arabic, were marked by a universalism of sources and great intellectual openness towards them, irrespective of their denominational provenance. The ʿAssālids were one of those distinguished families (*buyūtāt*) who, often over several generations, attained high positions in the civil service, as well as ecclesiastical prominence, and exerted a profound influence on the internal affairs of the community.[10] Ibn al-ʿAssāl, known as al-Kātib al-Miṣrī, the father of the four siblings, who became the main protagonist of the "Coptic Renaissance," was a high-ranking government official; one of the brothers, al-Amjad Abū al-Majd ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. after 1270), was secretary to the *dīwan* of the army. Al-Amjad's position required him to travel back and forth between Cairo and Damascus, which ensured a steady influx of books not previously available in Egypt, notably those by East- and West-Syriac, as well as Melkite, authors.[11] These books laid the foundations for the most famous book collection of the time, known as *al-Khizāna al-Amjadiyya*.

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8 When Shīrkūkh, Nūr al-Dīn's Kurdish deputy, became vizier in Egypt under the last Fāṭimid caliph in 563–564/1168–1169, he soon decreed in Cairo that "the Christians should remove the fringes from their turbans and should fasten (their waists) with their girdles, and the Jews (should attach) a piece of yellow cloth to their turbans"; see Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *History of the Patriarchs*, vol. 2.2, 106–107. For evidence that this policy was indeed implemented, see Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 2:288. On the *jizya* tax, see Eli Elshech, "Islamic Law, Practice, and Legal Doctrine: Exempting the Poor from the Jizya under the Ayyubids (1171–1250)," *Islamic Law and Society* 10 (2003): 348–375.

9 Adel Sidarus, "The Copto-Arabic Renaissance in the Middle Ages: Characteristics and Socio-political Context," *Coptica* 1 (2002): 141–161; idem, "Essai sur l'âge d'or de la littérature copte arabe (XIIIe–XIVe siècles)," in *Acts of the Fifth International Congress of Coptic Studies*, ed. David W. Johnson (Rome: Centro Internazionale de Microfichas, 1993), 2:443–462.

10 On these, see Adel Sidarus, "Families of Coptic Dignitaries (*buyūtāt*) under the Ayyūbids and the Golden Age of Coptic Arabic Literature (13th century)," *Journal of Coptic Studies* 15 (2013): 189–208.

11 Awad Wadīʿ, *Dirāsa ʿan al-Muʾtamin ibn al-ʿAssāl wa-kitābihi "Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn" wa-taḥqīqihi* (Cairo and Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1997), 66, n. 73.

Al-Amjad and his three brothers, al-Asʿad Abū l-Faraj Hibat Allāh ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. before 1259), al-Ṣafī ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. ca. 1265), and Muʾtaman al-Dawla Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. after 1270), all of whom he supported, appear to have been the nucleus of a close-knit scholarly network.[12] Georg Graf described them "as the centre of the literary Golden Age of the Copts in the 13th century."[13] In their linguistic and exegetical endeavors, the members of this circle interacted with one other and shared a similar approach. Not much is known about Ibn Kātib Qayṣar ("the son of the secretary of Qayṣar," i.e., of the Seljuk Amir ʿAlam al-Dīn Qayṣar, d. ca. 1260), a related figure, who excelled in theology and in biblical commentaries and translations.[14] Another member of the circle was Abū al-Shākir ibn al-Rāhib (fl. ca. 1250), whose father, al-Sanā Abū al-Majd Buṭrus ibn al-Muhadhdhib Abū al-Faraj al-Thuʿbān al-Rāhib, had been the preceptor of the ʿAssālid brothers. An encyclopedist in his scholarly production, Abū al-Shākir distinguished himself as theologian and the author of linguistic treatises, and composed a *Kitāb al-Tawārīkh* "Book of History."[15] This work was a major source for another Copto-Arabic historical treatise, the universal chronicle by Jirjis ibn al-ʿAmīd ibn al-Makīn (1205–1273), *al-Majmūʿ al-Mubārak* "The Blessed Collection."

The political stability of the Ayyūbid period provided fertile ground for intellectual flowering in the Jewish community as well. Refugees from Spain were

12 To be precise, al-Asʿad and al-Ṣafī had the same mother. Muʾtaman was their half-brother, born after their father's second marriage. The most recent and comprehensive introduction on the ʿAssālids is Wadīʿ, *Dirāsa ʿan al-Muʾtamin*. See also: Georg Graf, "Die koptische Gelehrtenfamilie der Aulād al-ʿAssāl und ihr Schrifttum," *Orientalia* 1 (1932): 34–56, 129–148, 193–204; Alexis Mallon, "Une école de savants égyptiens au Moyen-Âge," *Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale* 1 (1906): 109–131; 2 (1907): 213–264; idem, "Ibn al-ʿAssâl. Les trois écrivains de ce nom," *Journal Asiatique* 5 (1905): 509–529. On al-Asʿad's critical edition of the Arabic Gospels in use among the Copts and its apparatus, see below in detail.

13 Graf, *GCAL*, 2:387.

14 On Ibn Kātib Qayṣar, see: *CMR*, 4:453–456; Stephen J. Davis, "Introducing an Arabic Commentary on the Apocalypse: Ibn Kātib Qayṣar on Revelation," *Harvard Theological Review* 101 (2008): 77–96.

15 See Samuel Moawad, ed., *Abū Shākir ibn al-Rāhib: Kitāb al-Tawārīkh, Vol. 1: Chapters 1–47, Critical Edition with Introduction* (Cairo: Alexandria School, 2016). The work has three parts: the first on calendar reckoning, astronomy, and chronography; the second on civil and ecclesiastic history, beginning with biblical history; and the third on the history of councils. An epitome of the work has become known by the title *Chronicon Orientale*. On the long debates about its authorship, see Adel Sidarus, *Ibn ar-Rāhibs Leben und Werk. Ein koptisch-arabischer Enzyklopädist des 7./13. Jahrhunderts* (Freiburg: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1975): 41–45; idem, "Copto-Arabic Universal Chronography. Between Antiquity, Judaism, Christianity and Islam," *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 2 (2014): 221–250.

favorably received in Egypt.[16] The most famous of them was Moses Maimonides (1138–1204), who fled Cordoba after the city fell to the Almohads and arrived in Egypt, after a sojourn in Palestine, in 1166. There he completed his commentary on the Mishnah that became posthumously known as *Kitāb al-Sirāj* ("The Book of the Lamp"), his monumental code of law, the *Mishneh Torah*, and the *Guide of the Perplexed*. In 1185 he was appointed one of the physicians to al-Fāḍil, Saladin's vizier and the virtual ruler of Egypt after the latter's departure. Maimonides may also have treated Saladin himself, though this remains uncertain. What is certain is that he cared for other members of the sultan's family, including his son al-Malik al-Afḍal and his nephew Tāqī al-Dīn ʿUmar. Maimonides also assumed the position of *nagid* or "head of the Jews" (*raʾīs al-yahūd*). His son Abraham was appointed *nagid* after his father's death in 1204. Abraham composed *The Comprehensive Guide for Servants of God* (*Kifāyat al-ʿĀbidīn*), a book with a pietistic and mystical character. His descendants formed a class of intellectuals, community functionaries, and court physicians, very similar to the Coptic *buyūtāt*.

Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* (*Dalālat al-Ḥāʾirīn*) was held in great esteem in non-Jewish circles as well.[17] Both Christians and Muslims read and quoted from it. The first to quote him were the aforementioned Coptic scholars, al-Asʿad Ibn al-ʿAssāl, his brother Muʾtaman, and Ibn Kātib Qayṣar. The scholarly circles around the ʿAssālids that showed great interest in Maimonides' *Guide* also read and frequently quoted another work of Jewish provenance—*Sefer Joseph ben Gurion*, a medieval historiographical compilation in Hebrew that later came to be known as *Sefer Josippon*. Composed anonymously in southern Italy in the first half of the tenth century, it was soon translated into Arabic.[18] The translation initially circulated in Hebrew letters, but it was later copied over in Arabic script, which facilitated its disseminated beyond the Jewish community. Al-Ṣafī, in his *Nomocanon*, is the first to mention *Sefer Josippon*, but many other members of the ʿAssālid circle, as well as later scholars, did so as well.[19]

16 Eliyahu Ashtor-Strauss, "Saladin and the Jews," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 5 (1956): 305–326; Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 2:138.

17 As shown by Gregor Schwarb, "The Reception of Maimonides in Christian-Arabic Literature," *Ben ʿEver la-ʿArav: Contacts between Arabic Literature and Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages and Modern Times* 7 (2014): 109–175; idem, "Die Rezeption Maimonides' in der christlich-arabischen Literatur," *Judaica* 63 (2007): 1–45.

18 See Ronny Vollandt, "Ancient Jewish Historiography in Arabic Garb: *Sefer Josippon* between South Italy and Coptic Cairo," *Zutot* 11 (2014): 70–80.

19 Murqus Girgis, ed., *al-Ṣāfī ibn al-ʿAssāl: Majmūʿ al-qawānīn* (Cairo: Murqus Girgis, 1927), 17.

The most popular Jewish text among medieval Copts was Saadiah's Judaeo-Arabic translation of the Pentateuch, the *Tafsīr*. Coptic copies of the *Tafsīr*, transcribed into the Arabic alphabet, appeared at the very start of the Ayyūbid period and soon supplanted Arabic versions translated directly from the Coptic-Bohairic. The codices usually state explicitly that the text was "accurately copied from the translation of Saʿīd al-Fayyūmī [= Saadiah Gaon], from the Hebrew into Arabic" (*muḥarrarā min naql Saʿīd al-Fayyūmī min al-ʿibrānī ilā al-ʿarabī*).[20] There are indications that the ʿAssālids actively promoted the inclusion of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* in their studies. For example, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Or. 112 (olim 21), the earliest copy of the *Tafsīr* of Coptic provenance, was copied by the "monk Gabriel."[21] Before his elevation to patriarch of the Church of Alexandria as Gabriel III, he had been the preceptor of al-Amjad and a secretary to the al-ʿAssāl family.[22] He accompanied al-Amjad and his brothers during their travels to Damascus in search of manuscripts and transcribed many texts by them or important for their literary work. Another manuscript (Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, MS Mxt. 664), also an early Coptic copy of the *Tafsīr*, was in al-Amjad's personal library, the abovementioned *al-Khizāna al-Amjadiyya*.

These three texts, the *Guide*, *Josippon*, and the *Tafsīr*, reveal that the ʿAssālids and the circle of scholars they gathered around them had a keen interest in texts of Jewish origin.[23] At some point (it is hard to pinpoint exactly when), all three texts were transcribed from Hebrew into Arabic script. Maimonides was

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For a preliminary discussion of the reception of *Sefer Josippon* among Copts, see Vollandt, "Ancient Jewish Historiography."

20 E.g., Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (hereafter BML), MS Or. 112, fol. 1r.

21 As pointed out by Berend Jan Dikken, "Some Remarks about Middle Arabic and Saʿadya Gaon's Arabic Translation of the Pentateuch in Manuscripts of Jewish, Samaritan, Coptic Christian, and Muslim Provenance," in *Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic: Diachrony and Synchrony*, ed. Liesbeth Zack and Arie Schippers (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 51–81, on 71–72.

22 Cf. Leslie S.B. MacCoull, "A Note on the Career of Gabriel III, Scribe and Patriarch of Alexandria," *Arabica* 43 (1996): 357–360; but see also Georg Graf, "Die koptische Gelehrtenfamilie," 52–54; Samir Khalil Samir, *Brefs Chapitres sur la trinité et l'incarnation* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), 624–628; Mark N. Swanson, *The Coptic Papacy in Islamic Egypt (641–1517)* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2010), 97–100.

23 There are further traces of a Jewish influence that have not been followed up in current research: manuscripts of Arabic versions of the Pentateuch not infrequently display the Jewish weekly readings, according to both the Babylonian and Palestinian traditions (Hebr. *parashot* or *sedarim*), at times *parashot* are marked by the Hebrew names in Hebrew script, marginal glosses refer to the original meaning of a specific translation in the Masoretic text, and many manuscripts indicate that they have been collated with another translation from the Hebrew. I have noted such instances in the inventory of manuscripts in my *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, 221–276.

their major point of reference for philosophy and the biblical text was studied through Saadiah's *Tafsīr*, while the Arabic version of *Sefer Josippon* complemented both fields of learning and served as a source for post-biblical Jewish history.

These examples of Jewish texts that were read and studied by Christian intellectuals reflect the close interaction between the two communities in the social and professional spheres. It has become clear that Coptic and Jewish intellectuals belonged to the same class: *literati* and leaders of their respective communities, while also assuming high civic positions as physicians or secretaries in the Ayyūbid state *dawānīn*. Maimonides and the Muslim jurist Ibn Sanāʿ, who eulogized the former in a poem, as well as Maimonides' son Abraham and the eminent physician Ibn Abī Ūṣaybiʿa, all worked in the famous Nāṣirī hospital in Cairo. Jews and Christians often worked in the same hospitals or in the medical corps of the army or fleet, and their professional contacts must have led to the formation of personal relationships.[24]

A hitherto neglected document sheds new light on these personal relationships between the members of the two communities: the preface found at the start of two manuscripts of the *Tafsīr*, written by a Coptic scholar more than three hundred years after Saadiah. The Copt invited a distinguished member of the Jewish community of Old Cairo, someone with whom he had obviously established a personal relationship over a series of meetings, to help him copy a manuscript as accurately as possible and establish the correct transmitted text.

So in Shawwāl of 1242 CE, the Coptic scholar and his Jewish collaborator (I will seek to identify them below) sat facing each other and studied the text jointly. As the preface relates, each held his own copy of the *Tafsīr*. But while the Copt referred to a manuscript of Saadiah's translation written in Arabic script, the Jew read aloud from a manuscript that contained the same Arabic text in Hebrew letters. The Copt duly noted all textual variants between the two versions on his own copy and incorporated his collaborator's explanations in the form of a sophisticated interlinear apparatus as well as marginal glosses. Three later manuscripts preserve this joint enterprise: MSS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (hereafter BnF), Ar. 1; and Cairo, Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate (COP), Bibl. 32 and 21. All of them are dated to the last decade of the sixteenth century, stem from the same workshop, and were copied more than three centuries later from the same archetype (perhaps the autograph copy

24 On Jewish physicians in hospitals, see Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 2:251, and there 2:380 on the medical corps. On non-Muslim practitioners in Muslim hospitals, see Ahmed Ragab, *The Medieval Islamic Hospital. Medicine, Religion, and Charity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 164–169.

referred to in the preface).[25] The beginning of COP, Bibl. 21 (fols. 1–16) wore out and was restored with a different version, which omits the preface.

What follows is the text of the preface, based on BNF, Ar. 1, collated with COP, Bibl. 32 (= siglum A), and a translation into English. I refer to the incomplete *editio princeps* plus Latin translation by Christian Friedrich Schnurrer with the siglum B.[26]

25 See Ronny Vollandt, "Making Quires Speak. An Analysis of Arabic Multi-block Bibles and the Quest for a Canon," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 4 (2016): 173–209. All three manuscripts have the same lacuna at Genesis 19:23–20:2. Whereas MS Paris fails to indicate that text is missing (fol. 9v), MSS Cairo 32 (fol. 9r) and Cairo 21 (fols. 20v–21r) leave blank space that was filled in by a later hand. The same situation pertains for Gen. 45:17–46:6 (MS Paris, fols. 21v–22v; MS Cairo 32, fol. 19v; MS Cairo 21, fols. 39v–40r) and Exod. 8:17–9:7 (MS Paris, fols. 27r–27v; MS Cairo 32, fol. 24r; MS Cairo 21, fol. 48r).

26 Christian Friedrich Schnurrer, *De Pentateucho Arabico Polyglotto: Disputatio Philologica* (Tübingen: Litteris Sigmundianis, 1780), 7–38; reprinted in idem, *Dissertationes Philologico-Criticae* (Gotha: C.W. Ettinger, 1790), 197–225. The preface has been mentioned by Oluf Gerhard Tychsen, "Über die Quelle aus welcher die Handschrift der arabischen Version in den Polyglotten geflossen ist," *Repertorium für biblische und morgenländische Litteratur* 10 (1782): 95–110; idem, "Untersuchung ob R. Saadjah Haggaon Verfasser der arabischen Uebersetzung des Pentateuchs in den Polyglotten sey," *Repertorium für biblische und morgenländische Litteratur* 11 (1782): 82–112. Hasib Shehadeh, "A Non-Muslim Arabic Word," *Studia Orientalia* 55 (1984): 341–355, discussed one passage of the preface. More recently, Dikken, "Some Remarks," mentions the manuscripts and the apparatus.

2 The Text and Its Translation

[fol. 1r]

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وما توفيقي إلّا بالله[27]

(1)[28] الحمد لله الواحد الذات، المبدع الأرض والسموات، الباري النسمات، الجاعل في طبيعتها قبول الحياة والممات، والمشرِّف موسى بالرسالة وهارون بتلك الخدمات. نحمده على ما وهب من العقل وعلى ما هدى إليه من صِحّة النقل. بل نحمده على الإطلاق حمد القدرة والاستحقاق[29]، فإنّ من قصد ذكر وجهٍ حصرَ حمده فقد قصد إحصاء الدراري ومهما بالغ في البليغ المتعالي فهو دون استحقاق الباري.

(2) أمّا بعد، فإنّني لمـّا طالعتُ التوراة المقدّسة وجدت نسخها العربيّة التي وقفتُ عليها مباينةً بعض ألفاظها لبعض، وقد تَغايَرَ لذلك جزء من معانيها. فتأمّلتُ هذا الحَدَثان فوجدته من مخرجيها من لسانٍ إلى لسانٍ في ضروب الزمان. فإنّ من تراجمتها مَن كان له غرض فنحّاه ونسخ به الحقّ ومحاه. ومنهم مَن كان عنده تقصير في ترجمته، إمّا اللسانين المنقول منه والمنقول إليه، وإمّا أحدهما، فأخرجهم ذلك من[30] غير شعورهم إلى هذا العارض المذكور وهتك جهلهم المستور.

(3) وتَبَلَّجَ لي من صباح المطالعة ومن تواريخ المؤرّخين أنّ الاثنين والسبعين نقلوها من العبرانيّ إلى اليونانيّ نقلًا صحيحًا، وأنّ نَقَلَتَها من اليونانيّ إلى العربيّ دخل عليهم عارض الجهل باللسانين. ولم آلَف من اليونان، حيث كنت[31]، من يستقلّ بتحرير الألفاظ معي بالمقابلة.

(4) وإنّ العبريّين الذين نقلوها إلى العربيّ وقعوا في ذينك الأمرين المبتدأ بذكرهما. فتصفّحت نقل الشيخ سعيد الربّان الفيّوميّ فاستدللت من أنفاسه على أنّه في أهل ملّته أرجَحُ الناقلين وأفصَحُ

27 وما توفيقي إلّا بالله] A: omitted.
28 B omits the first paragraph.
29 لا الاستحقاق :A] والاستحقاق
30 من لك :A] ذلك
31 كنت] BNF, Ar. 1 and B: كتب , A: كنت

[fol. 1r]

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, my sole succor is with God.

(1) Praise be to God, the one in essence, originator of earth and heavens, creator of souls, constitutor of life and death as part of their nature, the one giving honor to Moses through his prophethood and Aaron through his priesthood. Let us praise him for the intellect that he bestowed upon us, for his guidance on the path through the certainty in which scripture has been transmitted. Let us praise him without ceasing, with vigor and as he deserves. Whoever mentions his name in praise could only limit his grace, as if he wanted to count the stars. No matter how much he attempted to exceed in the praise of the transcendent one, he could only come short of what the creator deserves.

(2) While studying the holy Torah, I found its Arabic versions that I had become acquainted with differing from one another in some of the expressions. As a consequence, they deviated in their meanings. I scrutinized this matter with care and found it to be due to the translators from one language into another during the ages. Some of them had a certain objective, which they pursued in their translation, and by this abrogated the true meaning and revoked it. Others had a deficiency in their translation, in what concerns the mastery of the source and the target language, or only either one of them. They did so without being aware of this impediment and in this way disclosed their hidden ignorance.

(3) From my readings and from the historical accounts it emerges that the seventy-two translators rendered the Torah from Hebrew into Greek without any fault. Only thereafter, when it was translated from Greek into Arabic, the insufficient knowledge of both languages became apparent. I, however, have never met a Greek [a Melkite] who was of such education in literature that he could act as a reviewer with me by comparing the Greek source text with the Arabic translation.

(4) Also the Jews who translated the Torah into Arabic fell short in these two aforementioned matters. However, as I perused the translation of the learned Rabbanite Saʿīd al-Fayyūmī [hereafter Saadiah], I satisfied myself owing to his

المترجمين، لما[32] راقَ سَمعي من وجيز لفظه العربيّ وفصيح جمهوره واتّحاد مسموع بعضه في اللسانين العبرانيّ والعربيّ وتحرير الأسماء والبلاد والألفاظ الباقية على عبريتها[33] في النسخ العربيّة وسلامتها من التصحيف ونقلها من اللفظ الكثيف إلى اللطيف. فاستنسختُ من نقله هذه النسخة التالية لهذه الخطبة وقصدت تحريرها. فقابلت عليها أحد أفاضل الإسرائيليّين الثابت اسمه في[34] آخر هذه النسخة، وكان لوَذَعِيًّا حافِظًا لنصّها مُستحضرًا لفصّها مُشتغلًا بِدَرس ألفاظها وتِلاوتها قَيِّمًا بشرح معانيها وإدراك غايتها، وكان بيده نسخة عبرانيّة، وهو يقرأ منها عربيًّا، وكان بيدي هذه النسخة التي تقدّم القول بأنّني استنسختُها من نقل الفيّوميّ.

(5) وقدّامي عدّة نسخ عربيّات إحداهنّ نقل أفاضل السامرة[35] من العبرانيّ، والأخريات من اليونانيّ. فمنهنّ ما أخرجه الحَارِث بن سنان، ومنهنّ ترجمة عبد الله بن الفضل، ومنهنّ نقلٌ عتيقٌ لم يُذكر في النسخ أسماء مترجميها، ومنهم أيضًا نسخة نقل القسّ الفاضل أبي الفرج بن الطيّب من السريانيّ إلى العربيّ نصًّا وشرحًا، ومنهم عدّة شروح للنصارى ولليهود وللسامرة. أمّا النصارى فبعض شروح الذهبيّ الفم وبعض شروح باسيلوس الناطق الروح القدسيّ من لسانيهما. وأمّا اليهود فشرح الشيخ أبي الفرج بن أسد والمعلّم أبي البصريّ[36] والرئيس أبي سعيد الداوديّ. وأمّا السامرة فشرح الحكيم صدقة المتطبّب.

(6) فأطلعتني المقابلة على أنّ سعيدً الفيّوميّ قد سلك في نقله عدّة مسالك: أحدها زيادات كثيرة في الألفاظ أثبتها في أصل نقله. وقد جعلتُ في هذه النسخة على كلّ لفظة منها علامةً تدلّ عليها وهي حرف الزاي، فمتى شُوهِدَ هذا الحرف بالحُمرة على لفظة منها

32 لما] A: om
33 عبريتها] BNF, Ar. 1 and B: عبرتها, A: عبريتها
34 في] A: om
35 السامرة] BNF, Ar. 1, A and B السمرة
36 البصري] B: البطري

style that he is the most preferred of all translators and the most eloquent interpreter among the people of his confession. I found his concise Arabic diction, his overall eloquence, and the consistent homophonic correspondence (*ittiḥād masmūʿ*) between the Arabic and the Hebrew, the rendering of proper names, countries, and the Hebrew terminology that was retained in the Arabic translation, as well as the absence of textual distortions (*taṣḥīf*) and his elegant transfer of obscure into clear words, to be very pleasing to the ear. Thus I copied his version in what follows this preface and with the intention of editing (*taḥrīr*) it most accurately. For this purpose, I summoned to my aid one of the most notable Israelites, whose name is stated at the end of this copy. He memorized the text and recalled its words skillfully. Further, he was well versed in the study of its expressions, its recitation (*tilāwa*), and everything related to the interpretation of its meaning, and grasped its underlying intention. In his hand he held a copy in Hebrew letters, from which he read aloud in Arabic. In my hand I held the present copy in Arabic letters, which is Saadiah's translation that I intend to transcribe.

(5) Furthermore, I had in front of me a number of additional Arabic versions of the Torah. Some of these were translated by notable Samaritan scholars, from Hebrew into Arabic. Others are from the Greek, including the translations of al-Ḥārith ibn Sinān and ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl, and also an ancient one in which the name of the translators is not mentioned. Another is the copy of the priest al-Faḍl Abū al-Faraj ibn al-Ṭayyib, including a translation and commentary, from Syriac into Arabic. What is more, I had at my disposal a number of commentaries of Christian, Jewish, and Samaritan provenance. As for the Christian commentaries, there are those by John Chrysostom and Basil of Caesarea; both spoke with the help of the Holy Spirit. With regard to the Jewish commentaries, there are those by the learned scholar Abū al-Faraj ibn Asad, the teacher Abū ʿAlī al-Baṣrī, and the prince Abū Saʿīd al-Dāwūdī. For the Samaritan commentaries, I had the commentary of the scholar Sadaqa al-Mutaṭabbib.

(6) The comparison revealed to me that Saadiah had a number of techniques in his translation. The first is the use of additional words in many instances to clarify the meaning, which I pointed out in this translation. In this copy, I have placed the letter *zay* [= *ziyāda* "addition"] as a rubricated sign over all additions in order to signal to each such instance. Whenever you encounter this letter in red ink,

[fol. 2r]

فليُعلَم أنّه قد زادها من عنده، إمّا لتقرير المعنى في اللسان العربيّ وإيضاحه واستتمامه، وإمّا لتنزيه الباري تعالى عن الجسميّة، كقول الكتّاب في قصّة سدوم وعامورا: «فضى الله كما فرغ من كلام إبراهيم»، فقال [الفيّوميّ] «فضى ملاك الله». وإمّا لرفع شبهة ودفعها وسَدّ بابها في وجه المعاند والمتشكّك، وإمّا لأغراض أخر يظهر جلّ أسبابها لمتأمّليها في مكانها إذا كان عارفًا.

(7) والمسلك الثاني: عدّة ألفاظ ثابتة في السريانيّ واليونانيّ والعبرانيّ وقد وضعها منها وأسقطها من جملتها، فمنها المعنى المكرّر لفظه في النصّ للتأكيد، أسقط تكراره واستغنى باللفظ الأوّل المشتمل على جميع المعنى عن اللفظ الثاني الوارد للتأكيد لا لزيادة في المعنى. والاسم المكرّر أيضًا. أمّا المعنى فكقول الكتّاب في السفر الرابع في القرابين عن رؤساء الأسباط عند نصب المسكن «في اليوم الأوّل قرّب فلان قصعة فضّة وزنها كذا وكرنيب وزنه كذا» وعدّد جميع القرابين واحدًا فواحدًا وكذلك ورد النصّ مشروحًا قربان كلّ رئيس سبط في كلّ يوم فشرح الفيّوميّ قربان رئيس السبط الأوّل في اليوم الأوّل واليوم الثاني، وما بعده قال «قرّب فلان مثل ذلك» وأحال تفصيل القربان الأوّل. وكذلك فعل في ملوك العيص حال موت الواحد ومُلك الذي ملك بعده. وأمّا الاسم فكخطاب الله لموسى عند الظهور في العلّيق «يا موسى يا موسى» فقال الفيّوميّ «يا موسى»[37] دفعةً واحدةً.

(8) ومنها تكرار الاسم المضمر الذي يتقدّم ذكره بذلك اللفظ الأوّل بعينه، فأسقطه واستغنى بضمير الاسم عن التصريح بذكره ثانيًا. والمثال فيه قول الكتّاب في قصّة لوط «ثمّ دخل الملكان إلى سدوم ولوط على باب سدوم جالسًا» فالنصّ كرّر بذكر سدوم، وهو [أيّ الفيّوميّ] عَدَل عن تكراره وقال «ولوط جالسًا على بابها». وكقول الكتّاب أيضًا «فقالت المرأة الثعبان[38] أغواني»، وكان قد تقدّم

37 A: om] يا موسى فقال الفيومي يا موسى
38 A: الثعبان] لثعبان

[fol. 2r]

know that something has been added by Saadiah with the purpose of specifying, elucidating, and completing the sense in the Arabic language or to avoid anthropomorphism. This is illustrated in the narrative of Sodom and Gomorra (Genesis 18:33): "And the Lord went His way, as soon as He had left off speaking to Abraham," which he translated as "And the messenger of the Lord [went His way, as soon as He had left off speaking to Abraham]," either to remove suspicion of anthropomorphism and undermine the arguments of the stubborn and skeptics or for other reasons that will reveal themselves to one who observes closely, if he is knowledgeable.

(7) The second technique: Although some expressions are found in the Syriac, Greek, and Hebrew [source] texts, he disposed of them and dropped them from their corresponding sentences [in his translation]. Whenever the meaning of an expression was repeated in the source text for the sake of emphasis he omitted the repetition. He contented himself with the first expression, which was only used as a [tautological] emphasis, not bearing significant additional information in meaning. He dealt likewise with repeated proper names.

As for the repetition in meaning, compare what is written in the fourth book [of the Pentateuch] regarding the sacrifices of the tribes' chiefs when the tabernacle was erected (Numbers 7:13–88): "On the first day so-and-so offered one silver dish and one silver sprinkling bowl, the weight thereof was such-and-such." The scripture lists each of the offerings. In this way it furnishes in detail the offering of each tribe's chief on each day. Saadiah translated the text literally regarding the offering on the first and second days. Thereafter, however, he stated so-and-so offered the like and passed over the specifications that were already referred to in the first sacrifice. He did the same thing with regard to the kings of Esau (Genesis 36), when each died and another came to reign after him. As for the repetition of proper names, see for example the Lord's speech to Moses when he appeared in the bush: "Moses, Moses!" (Exodus 3:4). And Saadiah translated "Moses" only once.

(8) Further, he omitted the repetition of pronouns when they were mentioned previously in an identical manner. He contented himself with using pronominal suffixes in the second instance and without using the name again explicitly. An example for this method is found in the narrative of Lot (Genesis 19:1). "And the two angels came to Sodom at evening; and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom." The text mentions Sodom twice. He desisted from this repetition and

ذكرها قبل ذلك فنقل الفيّوميّ «فقالت الثعبان أغواني» ولم يكرّر ذكر الامراة واكتفى بضمير الاسم عن إظهاره دفعةً ثانيةً لأنّه محذور في اللغة العربية التي نقل إليها.

(9) ومنها اكتفاؤه بذكر الفعل عن ذكر مصدره، كقول الله تعالى لآدم «في يوم أكلك من الشجرة تموت موتًا» فلم يقل الفيّوميّ «موتًا» بل ذكر الفعل واستغنى به عن ذكر مصدره. ومنها استغناؤه تارةً بالموصوف عن ذكر الصفة، كقول الكتّاب «فأخذ الله الإله آدم وأنزله في جنان عدن» فقال الفيّوميّ «فأخذ الله آدم» ولم يقل الله «الإله» واستغنى باسم الموصوف سبحانه عن صفته بالإلهيّة. وكقوله أيضًا لموسى «قل لفرعون قال الله إله العبريّين أطلق قومي يعبدوني» فقال الفيّوميّ «أطلق قومي يعبدوني» ولم «يقل إله العبرانيّين». وتارةً بالصفة عن ذكر الموصوف، كقول الكتّاب في السفر الثالث «وسبّ ابن المرأة الإسرائيليّة [وذكر] الاسم وشتمه»، فقال [الفيّوميّ] «وسبّ ابن الإسرائيليّة» [أي من دون أن يذكر اسم المرأة].

(10) والمسلك الثالث ينقسم أقسامًا عدّة: فمنها نظير الشيء الذي تعالى فيه الكتّاب فعبّر عنه أنّه هو بعينه، كقول الله عن آدم إنّه «يلصق بزوجته ويصيران كلاهما جسدًا واحدًا» فحذّر الفيّوميّ من معترض يقول إنّا نراهما جسدين لا واحدًا، فقال «فيصيران كجسد واحد». وكقول الكتّاب أنّ «الله أخرجكم من كور الحديد من مصر»، فقال [الفيّوميّ] «أخرجكم من شبيه بكور الحديد». وكقول النصّ عن سحرة فرعون أنّ «كلّ رجل منهم طرح عصاه فصارت تنانين» فقال الفيّوميّ «فصارت كتّانين».

said: "and Lot was sitting in *its* gate." A comparable case is "And the woman said: 'The serpent beguiled me …' " (Genesis 3:13), as she is already mentioned before that. Saadiah translated "And *she* said: 'The serpent beguiled me.' " Since repetition is unacceptable in the Arabic language, he avoided the repeated mention of the woman and restricted himself to the use of the pronoun on the second occurrence.

(9) Another method is his use of a simple verbal form when translating the [Hebrew] infinitive construct that follows a verb [= the *figura etymologica*], as can be seen in the speech of the Lord, exalted be He, to Adam "for in the day of your eating thereof you shall surely die death" (Genesis 2:17). And Saadiah, in abstaining from translating the infinitive construct, did not say "die death" [as an imitation of the Hebrew] but only used the verbal form. Elsewhere, he disregards the attribute of a noun, as can be seen for example regarding "and the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden" (Genesis 2:15). He translated "and the Lord took the man" and not the "Lord God," thereby dispensing with the noun which is specified by an attribute to express the divinity of the Lord. This is comparable to what the Lord said to Moses, "say unto him, thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: Let My people go, that they may serve Me" (Exodus 9:13). Saadiah translated "Let My people go, that they may serve Me" and dispensed with "the Lord, the God of the Hebrews." Elsewhere, *vice versa*, he disregards in his translation the noun that is specified by an attribute. As in the third book "And the son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name, and cursed" (Leviticus 24:11), which he translated as "And the son of the *Israelite* (*al-Isrāʾīlīyya*) blasphemed."

(10) The third technique has several aspects: The first aspect is a metaphorical equation of things that in the biblical dictum are presented as exactly the same. This is illustrated by the speech of the Lord with regard to Adam that he "shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one body" (Genesis 2:24). Saadiah, in order to refute anyone who might object that we see both of them as two distinct bodies and not one, translated "and they shall be *as* one body." In the same manner, the verse "the Lord brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 4:20), he translated "the Lord brought forth from the *like* of an iron furnace." This can also be observed in the narrative of Pharaoh's sorcerers, where it is said that "each of them cast down his rod, and they became serpents" (Exodus 7:11). Saadiah, however, translated "and they became *like* serpents."

(11) والقسم الثاني من هذا المسلك استعماله الخاصّ في موضع العامّ. فإنه استعمل البلد بدلًا من الأرض في جلّ نقله، واستعماله عضواً عوضًا من غيره، كقول الكتّاب أن «يكون البدنة على قلب هارون

[fol. 2v]

حال دخوله بين يدي الله» فقال الفيّوميّ «يكون على يده». وكقول الكتّاب أيضًا أن «تصنع الكهنة لهم سراويلات لتغطّي من الحقوين إلى الوركين» فقال «إلى الركبتين». واستعماله الكلّ عوضًا من جزءه، كقول النصّ إنّ إخوة يوسف[39] لمّا وصلوا إلى البيت وجدوا فضّة كلّ رجل «في فم وعائه» فقال «في وعائه» فاستغنى بذكر الكلّ عن الجزء. واستعماله المفرد في موضع جمعه، كقول الله تعالى «أوّل ما خلق الله السموات والأرض» فقال [الفيّوميّ] «السماء» ولم يقل «السموات». وكإخبار الله عن الرياح أو الروح أنّها «كانت تهبّ على وجه المياه» فقال «على وجه الماء» وعكس ذلك قول الكتّاب عن لابان أنّه قال ليعقوب عند سفره من عنده بغير علمه «لِمَ لم تخبرني فكنت أشيّعك بفرح وغناء ودف وطنبور» فقال «ودفوف وطنابير». ومنها البدل وهو استعماله لفظًا بدلًا من اللفظ الوارد النصّ ومعناهما متَّحَد، كقول الكتّاب في السفر الثالث «سوءة أخت أبيك وأخت أمّك لا تكشف»، فقال «عمّتك وخالتك» والمعنى واحد مع مغايرة اللفظ. وجمهور ما ورد النصّ في هذين المسلكين قد أضفته في مواضعه بالحمرة وجعلت قبله حرف العين المهملة قاصدًا بذلك تهذيب النسخة وتحريرها على ما أمكن.

(12) والمسلك الرابع: نقله عدّة ألفاظ من اللغة المستعملة إلى اللغة العربيّة الأدبيّة إظهارًا لفصاحته وبيانًا لمعرفته بها وخبرته، إلّا أنّه في بعضها وضع اللفظة العربيّة فيما هو بعيد من معناها. ومنها ما استعمله لضدّها كلفظة «الرَّتّ» فإنّه استعملها عوضًا من أصناف الحيوان البقريّ الذي كان يُقرَّب لله تعالى. والرَّتّ في موضوع اللغة العربيّة لفظة مشتركة يستدلّ به على ثلاثة[40] معان. أحدها الرئيس ورؤساء البلد رتُوتها، والمعنى الثاني الرُّتوت الخنازير، والمعنى الثالث الرُّتَّة بالضمّ العُجمة في الكلام والحُكلة فيه. فأمّا المعنيان الأوّل والثالث فهما من صفات أشخاص الحيوان الناطق التي لا يستجيز

39 يوسف واخوته :A] اخوة يوسف
40 ثلثة :A] ثلاثة

(11) The second aspect is the use of the specific for the general. In most of his translation he employed the town in place of the country or one part of the body in place of the rest of it, as for example in the verse, "[and they shall be on Aaron's heart] when he goes in

[fol. 2v]

before the Lord" (Exodus 28:30). In contrast, Saadiah translated "[And they shall be] in front of him." Further, it is said that the priests shall make themselves "linen breeches to cover from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach" (Exodus 28:42). Saadiah translated "unto the knees." And conversely, he sometimes employs the whole in place of only a part, as in the verse on Joseph's brothers when they returned home and found silver on each man's "mouth of the sack" (Genesis 44). He translated "each man's sack," and restricted himself to mention the whole instead only a part. What is more, he employs the singular in place of the plural: in his translation of the verse "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), he uses "heaven" instead of "heavens." Equally, this can be seen in the account of the "winds" or "spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters," which is translated as "on the face of the water." A contrary case thereof is what we read in the narrative of Laban—what he said to Jacob when [the latter] departed without telling him: "wherefore did you not tell me, that I might have sent you away with song and with joy, with tabret and with harp" (Genesis 31:27). He translated "with tabrets and with harps." Finally there is substitution, which is the translation by an expression that differs from what is found in the text although their meaning is synonymous. Whereas in the book of Leviticus (18:12–13) it says, "You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister and mother's sister," he translated "your paternal aunt and your maternal aunt." Although the translations are not literal, the meaning is the same. And with regard to everything that pertains to this, I have added a literal translation at the specific instances in red ink. I have placed before it the letter *ʿayn* [= *al-ʿibrānī*], which indicates correction by collation [with the original Hebrew source] and its emendation to the best of my knowledge.

(12) The fourth technique: translating some expressions from the common language into the literary language to display his eloquence, knowledge, and skillfulness. However, at times he misuses the Arabic in a way that does not correspond to its original meaning. Some of them he employed in a contrary sense, as for example the word *al-ratt*, which he used for a kind of bovine animal that was offered as a sacrifice to God. According to the prescriptive rules

التقريب بها إلّا بعض عبّاد الأصنام الذين نقل عنهم أنّهم كانوا يقرّبون أولادهم لمعبوداتهم المصنوعة، وهذا لا يمكن أن يكون قصده فإنّ هذا الكتاب المقدّس الذي نقله قد حذّر من هذا الفعل وجعل العقوبة عليه القتل. فبقي المعنى الثالث وهو الحيوان الخنزيريّ. وهذا حيوان نجس على مذهبه وشناعة عظيمة على من يجعل النجس من الحيوانات القرابين الإلهيّة. فإن كان عمل ذلك جهلًا منه فعفا[41] الله عنه. وإن كان عن علم به فيَا للعجب العجيب منه. وإن كان لسرٍّ استودعه فهو من الممكن البعيد. وإن كان قد اصطلح أهل طائفته على وضع هذه اللفظة للبقر دون الخنزير فهو من الممكن القريب لأنّ منهم من استعملها مثله. وقد نَكَتَ جمهور هذا الألفاظ تمامها في هذه النسخة باللفظ الناطق به ألسُن الخواصّ والعوامّ المتداول له الناس في سائر الأيّام حتى لا يستغرّبه سمع ولا يجهله رعاع ولا ينفر من شاذّة طباع، بل يفهمه الجاهل به كفهم العالم له ويتساويان كلاهما فيه. وله طرق أخر لا يمكن الاستيلاء على ذكر جميعها في هذه الخطبة، وهي واضحة في مكانها. والحقّ أقول أنّني فيما أبيّته لم أتعصّب له ولا عليه بل كان تحرير النصّ هو الغرض والذي ظهر من تحقيقه وتنميقه إنّما جرى بالعرض.

(13) وإذا لمحتَ أيّها الناظر في هذه النسخة حرف السين المهمَلة علامةً على كلام فاعلَم أنّه نقل السامرة. وكذلك حرف الخاء المعجمة علامة على أنّه نقل من نسخة أخرى. وقد عزمت إن شاء الربّ وتأخّرت الوفاة على نقل نسخة من هذه النسخة أثبت فيها الناقص

[fol. 3r]

وأصنع منها زئدًا وأقصد فيها النصّ وأجعل قبلها مقدّمةً مشحونةً بعدّة فوائد من علوم هذا الكتاب المقدّس أكشف بها الأسرار الإلهيّة لمن استترت عن فهمه واحتجبت ونأت عن خاطره وتغرّبت

41 فعفى :A [فعفا

of the Arabic language, *al-ratt* is a polysemic term and can designate three things: (1) chiefs, the chiefs of a place are called *rutūt*; (2) swine; and (3) *al-rutta* is a defect in the speech and an impediment therein. The first and the third meaning apply only to humans and it is not possible to use these terms in this context, unless he meant to refer to some idol worshippers about whom it is recounted that they offer their children to their man-made idols. This, however, is far from Saadiah's intention, for the Bible he translated from already warned of this custom and made it punishable by death. The only meaning he could have meant is that of swinish animals. Yet, this species is unclean to his denomination and the one who brings unclean species as offerings to God will be a great horror. If he does so without knowledge God will forgive him. If he does so knowingly, what a strange thing would that be! And that he did so covertly, that would be an unlikely possibility. It must therefore follow that the people of his denomination employ this term to designate oxen, and not swine. This is the only plausible interpretation; all the more given that some of them used the term in the same sense. I have marked these expressions in his translation with those that are always understood the same way by the educated and the common people. This was done so that no one of the readers would be led into confusion nor the riff-raff fail to understand, nor anybody with an inferior nature be disgusted, but both the ignorant and the learned will comprehend. And Saadiah has other methods in translation that cannot be discussed here comprehensively in this preface. They are obvious when they occur in the text. But, truly, in what I brought in the last few sections I tried not to be biased. It was my intention to edit the text accurately. What was revealed was nothing but a byproduct of correcting and emending the text.

(13) If you, reader, spotted in this copy the letter *sīn* [= *al-sāmira*, the Samaritans], know that it refers to the translation of the Samaritans. Likewise, the letter *khā'* [= *nuskha ukhrā*, "another version"] marks the readings of other copies. I have resolved, God willing and if death does not come to me sooner, that I will make a copy of this version

[fol. 3r]

and add what was dropped and correct this text. And I have added this preface that abounds with merits for the different fields of biblical study. By its means, I reveal divine secrets of the Bible, for those whose understanding of them had

وأفتح له بها أقفال الأذهان المغلقة وأرفع بها إليه عيون الخواطر المطرقة وأجعل[ـه] كفّارة للذنوب السابقة ونستعيذ بالله من اللاحقة.

(14) وإذا كنّا[42] لم نلزم الأدب ولم نعمل العمل الفاضل الملائكيّ النسب فلنخرج عشور مواهب العقل المطبوع والمكتسب والله تعالى يوفّقنا لأن يخلى قصدنا هذا من الرياء فإنّه في الدنيا آفة العبادة، والفخر الباطل فإنّه في الآخرة خرفة السعادة. ونجعل ما يتفوّه به في هذا المقام ومثله قصدًا للإفادة والاستفادة لنبلغ بذلك في شأن الملكوت[43] ما لا تبلغه الآمال والإرادة بفضله الذي يشرف شمسه على الخطاة والأبرار ويرسل به غيثه للأخيار والأشرار مع علمه بأسرار القلوب وقلوب الأسرار والحمد لواهب العقل إنّه على كلّ شيء قدير وبالإجابة جدير.

42 لنا :A] كنّا

43 في شاء والملكوت :BNF, Ar. 1; A] في شأن الملكوت

been obscured, disguised, kept far from its original meaning, or made abstruse. I shall release, with this preface, the locks on the intellect and, with it, I direct the eyes towards deep thoughts [to the hidden details of the biblical text], and thus I shall let it be an atonement for previous sins. In God we seek refuge from future sins!

(14) If we had not committed ourselves to fine manners and had not dedicated ourselves to the angelic deed [i.e., a life free from passions and focused on the contemplation of God], let us then pay the tithes of the naturally disposed and acquired gifts of the intellect. May God, extolled be He, help us to keep away our intention from fractiousness, be it in being negligent in worship or taking vain pride in this world, be it in pursuing a feeble-minded happiness in the afterlife. As pronounced on this occasion and other similar ones, let us make our aim a benefit to others and a benefit to ourselves so that we may reach in the kingdom of God what is seemingly unreachable by hopes and good will with His grace, by which He distinguishes the sun over the sinners and righteous, and by which He sends His rain to the good and the bad. Verily, He knows the secrets of hearts and the hearts of secrets. Praise be to Him who bestows on man the intellect; omnipotent and worthy of prayers is He!

3 Commentary

The author of the preface describes the great variety of Arabic versions that were in use among the Copts in his day. It did not escape his attention that each of them, being based on multiple source languages, had its own internal history, which led to variations in the text. The motif of corruption in translation is prominent in many contemporary writings, mainly but not exclusively of Muslim provenance, where it was usually linked to the concept of *taḥrīf*, i.e., the twisting and distortion of the divine revelation.[44] Transmission was flawed, he recounts, due either to insufficient knowledge of the source and/or the target language or to the translator's particular agenda.

He summarizes the account of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, who commissioned seventy-two Jewish scholars to translate the Torah into Greek, which he could have known from the aforementioned Arabic translation of *Sefer Josippon*.[45] He mentions that he does not know Greek and failed to find a Melkite to help him study the Arabic translation in juxtaposition with the Septuagint. Saadiah's version, however, is the one that he praises and finds most excellent in terms of style, eloquence, and accuracy. He arrived at this conclusion by a comparison with other translations and commentaries, Jewish, Samaritan, and Christian. His main interest was in the Hebrew original, which, were it not for Saadiah's *Tafsīr*, would have remained a closed book to him. As is known, the *Tafsīr* is not a literal translation. In order to grasp the original meaning of the Hebrew, he first must establish an accurate text of the *Tafsīr* and discern which parts of Saadiah's translation reflect his translation technique and which reflect the Hebrew source. For this purpose, so he reports, he solicited the help of a Jewish colleague.

4 "One of the Most Notable Israelites"

The preface recounts how the Coptic scholar and his Jewish collaborator, in what appears to be a series of meetings, sat facing each other and studied the text jointly. In these gatherings a variety of issues were discussed: Saadiah's choice of lexicon and translation techniques, the literal meaning of the Hebrew text, and medieval Jewish interpretations of certain passages. These discussions

44 Compare Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, 12, n. 30.

45 Abraham Wasserstein and David J. Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 192–216.

laid the basis for the apparatus and the marginal glosses. The three surviving manuscripts can therefore be seen as a transcript of their joint scholarly endeavors.

The name of the Jewish collaborator, whom the author of the preface describes as "one of the most notable Israelites" (*aḥad afāḍil al-yahūd*), is unfortunately omitted in the two manuscripts that contain the preface. When one turns to the end of the book of Deuteronomy, one searches in vain for the name supposedly "stated at the end," as we are told in the preface and as must have been the case in the common ancestor of all three manuscripts. Fortunately, however, a colophon survives in MS Cairo 21 (fol. 147r) and provides a name and a date.[46] The Jew is identified as Abū al-Majd ibn Abī Manṣūr ibn Abī al-Faraj al-Isrā'īlī, and the project is stated to have been carried out in Shawwāl 639 (1242). Abū al-Majd is known from a number of documents of the first half of the thirteenth century, preserved in the various Cairo Genizah collections.[47] He served as cantor and treasurer of the Babylonian congregation of Old Cairo at the time of the *nagid* Abraham ben Maimon (1186–1237). Most of these documents, in which he frequently appears in connection to the distribution of alms, date to 1208–1219. One fragment, Cambridge University Library, T-S 13J15, which gives his patronymic as Ibn Abī al-Faraj, leaves no doubt that we are dealing with the same person.

5 Other Translations and Commentaries Used

The Coptic scholar, whose identity we have not yet established, had a wide array of texts at his disposal. A closer description of these sources may help us better delineate his scholarly profile. He mentions translations and commentaries of Jewish, Samaritan, West- and East-Syrian, and Melkite provenance, which he consulted in order to compare Saadiah's translation techniques with those employed in other Arabic versions of the Pentateuch. The comparison had made him aware that the *Tafsīr* departs from a literal translation in various ways; hence, even though he prefers it to all other translations, it does not reflect the Masoretic text verbatim. The ultimate purpose of his comparison was therefore to probe which parts of Saadiah's *Tafsīr* reflect the Hebrew accurately and which are the product of his translation techniques, a concern that

46 I have relied on the BYU microfilm. The quality is too poor to attempt a full transcription here.

47 See Goitein, *Mediterranean Society*, 6:5. A search for his name in the Princeton Genizah Project reveals more than thirty references, in various fragments.

is central in the second part of the preface and in the marginal glosses (see below). They serve as a textual corrective to Saadiah's not always literal translation.

As he explains, the authors whose texts he juxtaposed with Saadiah *Tafsīr* include those who produced a translation (*naql* or *tafsīr*) of the Pentateuch and those who commented on it (*sharḥ*). In the first group we find, in addition to Saadiah, an unspecified Samaritan scholar, whom we can identify with some certainty as Abu Saʿīd (Egypt, thirteenth century). Abu Saʿīd did not set out to produce a new translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch into Arabic, but revised an earlier translation and added various *scholia* to it.[48] The Copt then mentions al-Ḥārith ibn Sinān (Ḥarran, active before 956), responsible for an Arabic translation of the Syro-Hexapla, which circulated widely among the Copts.[49] ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl[50] (Antioch, eleventh century) and Abū Faraj ibn al-Ṭayyib (Iraq, eleventh century) close this group. Although it is not clear to which text the latter reference alludes, we may assume that the author of the preface culled the translation of ibn al-Ṭayyib from his commentary.[51]

Among those who were both translators and commentators he mentions the Church fathers Basil the Great and John Chrysostom. The former's commentary on the Hexameron and the latter's homilies on the book of Genesis exist in an Arabic translation by the aforementioned ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl; this must be the form in which the author of the preface knew these works.[52] In addition, he also states his familiarity with Qaraite scholars such as Yeshuʿah ben Judah (mid-eleventh century), Yefet ben ʿElī (tenth century), and David ben Boaz (late tenth century) and with the Samaritan Ṣadaqa ibn Munajjab al-Mutaṭabbib (d. 1223). The first three, who belonged to the Qaraite community of Jerusalem, are identified by their Arabic names: Abū al-Faraj ibn Asad, Abū

48 See: Hasib Shehadeh, *The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1989–2002); idem, "The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch: Prolegomena to a Critical Edition" (PhD diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1989) [Hebrew]; idem, "The Arabic Translation of the Samaritan Pentateuch," in *The Samaritans*, ed. Alan David Crown (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 481–516. Abu Saʿīd's *scholia* were published by Abraham S. Halkin, "The Scholia to Numbers and Deuteronomy in the Samaritan Arabic Pentateuch," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 34 (1943): 41–59.

49 See Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, 60–62, and the full bibliography there.

50 For details on ibn al-Faḍl's scholarly output, see Alexander Treiger, "ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl al-Anṭākī," in *CMR*, 3:89–113.

51 See, e.g., *Ibn al-Ṭaiyib: Commentaire sur la Genèse par Ibn aṭ-Ṭaiyib*, ed. Joannes Cornelis Josephus Sanders (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1967). For further details, see Julian Faultless, "Ibn al-Ṭayyib," in *CMR*, 2:667–697.

52 Cf. Graf, *GCAL*, 2:56 and 1:339–340.

ʿAlī al-Baṣrī the teacher, and Abū Saʿīd al-Dāwūdī the prince (*ha-nāsī*). Each of them produced a running commentary on the Pentateuch, usually arranged in a tripartite manner (Hebrew verse, translation, commentary); all of them—what is important in the present context—were available in Arabic script.[53] The Samaritan scholar, Ṣadaqa ibn Munajjā al-Mutaṭabbib, composed an Arabic commentary on Genesis.[54]

One notices the great geographical and denominational variety here—a first indication that links the anonymous Coptic scholar to the ʿAssālid circle described above. The texts would have been accessible to him from the private libraries of al-Amjad ibn al-ʿAssāl or other members of the network, whose profound erudition and intensive literary output rested to a large degree on their large collections of religious and scientific manuscripts, in particular those produced outside the Coptic community.[55]

6 The System of Sigla

All three manuscripts exhibit an interlinear apparatus written in red ink. As described in the preface, different sigla are employed: /خ/ for variant readings (*nuskha ukhrā*), /ع/ for Hebrew (*al-ʿibrānī*), and /س/ for the Samaritan version (*al-sāmira*). /ز/ marks exegetical additions (*ziyāda*) in the *Tafsīr* (on this see below). In MS BnF, Ar. 1, the copyist abandoned the apparatus after the book of Genesis. MS COP, Bibl. 32 includes the interlinear notation only on occasion and totally dispenses with the marginal glosses. The fullest set is found in MS COP, Bibl. 21.

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53 On the Qaraite translations, see Meira Polliack, *The Karaite Tradition of Arabic Bible Translation: A Linguistic and Exegetical Study of Karaite Translations of the Pentateuch from the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

54 The commentary has been studied comprehensively by Frank Weigelt, "Der Genesiskommentar des Samaritaners Ṣadaqa b. Munaǧǧā" (PhD diss., University of Bergen, 2015). Cf. also Ayala Loewenstamm, "From the Commentary of Ṣadaqa b. Munajjā the Physician on Genesis" [Hebrew], in eadem, *Karaite and Samaritan Studies; Collected and Posthumous Papers*, ed. Joshua Blau (Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2008), 3–135. Hasib Shehadeh has transcribed parts of the only surviving manuscripts. The files can be accessed at https://tuhat.halvi.helsinki.fi/portal/en/persons/haseeb-shehadeh%282cb559bb-2364-437d-87d7-d577608eb76e%29/publications.html (Accessed 23 February 2016).

55 Wadīʿ, *Dirāsa ʿan al-Muʾtamin*, 66, n. 73; but very explicitly Gregor Schwarb, "The Coptic and Syriac Receptions of Neo-Ashʿarite Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 547–566. Schwarb ("The Reception of Maimonides" and "Die Rezeption Maimonides'") stresses the essential role of those collections for the literary output of the "Coptic Renaissance."

The first layer of this notation refers to simple textual variants. The Coptic scholar's main concern was to produce an authentic or authoritative copy of the original text of the *Tafsīr*. There were many Coptic exemplars of Saadiah's *Tafsīr*, but the copies available exhibited many variants in their readings, which he now set out to correct. He invited Abū al-Majd to help him with this task. While Abū al-Majd read out the text from the original Jewish version in Hebrew letters, the Coptic scholar marked any variants he found with the siglum /خ/ (i.e., *nuskha ukhrā*, "another reading"), as was common in the Arabic manuscript tradition. For example, throughout the first chapter of Genesis, whenever Saadiah translates the Hebrew lexeme *raqiaʿ* "firmament" as *jalad* "firmament, a solid, firm cover," as attested in all early Judaeo-Arabic copies of the *Tafsīr*, the Coptic scholar adds the variant *bisāṭ* "platform, a raised horizontal flat surface." This variant is indeed found in Coptic copies in Arabic script of the *Tafsīr*.[56] Here are additional illustrations:

	Judaeo-Arabic MS BNF, Ar. 1		**Variant reading**		**Coptic MSS**
Gen. 3:18	ودردرا	"and thorns"	خ وحسكا	"and spines"	وحسكا[57]
Gen. 9:16	واظهر	"I shall let it appear"	خ وانظر	"I shall look upon it"	وانظر[58]
Exod. 1:22	في النيل	"into the Nile"	خ في الخليج	"into the bay"	في الخليج[59]
Deut. 33:2	ساعير	"Seir"	خ الشراة	"al-Shurā"	الشراة[60]

The second layer of the collation does not refer to textual variants, but adds a text-critical dimension to the apparatus by comparing the translation to its Hebrew *Vorlage*, marked by the siglum /ع/, along with references to the Samaritan Pentateuch, marked by the siglum /س/. Similar notation systems are employed in Islamic scholarship, in which the sigla commonly represent

56 E.g., Florence, BML, MS Or. 112, fols. 1v–2r; Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereafter BAV), MS Ar. 2, fols. 1r–2r; London, British Library (hereafter BL), MS Harl. 5475, fols. 1r–1v. For a list of manuscripts that contain the Coptic recension of Saadiah's translation in Arabic script, see Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, 229–239.

57 So in Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, MS Bibl. 24, fol. 2v. However, Florence, BML, MS Or. 112, fol. 5r; Vatican, BAV, MS Ar. 2, fol. 5r; and London, BL, MS Harl. 5475, fol. 4r read ودردرا.

58 E.g., Florence, BML, MS Or. 112, fol. 2r; Vatican, BAV, MS Ar. 2, fol. 12r.

59 Cf. Florence, BML, MS Or. 112, fol. 81v; Vatican, BAV, MS Ar. 2, fol. 78v; London, BL, MS Harl. 5475, fol. 74r.

60 Cf. Florence, BML, MS Or. 112, fol. 306r; Vatican, BAV, MS Ar. 2, fol. 265v; London, BL, MS Harl. 5475, fol. 279v.

different transmitters in the Ḥadīth, science, grammar, and astronomy.[61] More relevant to the present enterprise, however, the method of text-critical *ʿalāmāt* or sigla had a long pedigree in the Christian tradition, which is clearly echoed in the Coptic scholar's apparatus. For example, the Hexapla, Origen's *opus magnum* of the Greek Old Testament in six parallel columns (and more for some books), was equipped with an elaborate set of marginal sigla. These were intended as a meta-apparatus to help the reader's eye navigate across rather than down the page, highlighting the agreement and disagreement between the Septuagint and the Greek versions of the Three: Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion.[62] The same method is followed in the Syro-Hexapla. In contrast to the original Hexapla, however, here the Syriac counterpart was laid out in a single block of text, forcing the reader to rely on the marginal apparatus in order to compare textual variants. As a result of this simpler layout, it is usually preserved in a fuller and more accurate way than manuscripts of the Greek Hexapla. Aquila's translation is represented by /A/ in Greek and /ܐ/ in Syriac, Symmachus by /Σ/ and /ܣ/, and Theodotion by /Θ/ and /ܬ/. When all three give the same reading, the siglum /Γ/ (/ܓ/ in Syriac), representing the Greek numeral three, is used. Other versions or sources are abbreviated in various ways.

Many Arabic Bible manuscripts of Coptic provenance have analogous interlinear and marginal text-critical notations, reporting variant translations based on different versions and often written in red ink to make them stand out. Some of them are more systematic, others less so.[63] Our anonymous author's apparatus is closest, however, to the well-known enterprise of al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraj

61 See Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts. A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden: Brill, 2009): 271–274; idem, "Taxonomy of Scribal Errors and Corrections in Arabic Manuscripts," in *Theoretical Approaches to the Transmission and Edition of Oriental Manuscripts*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer and Manfred Kropp (Würzburg: Ergon, 2007), 217–235; idem, "Technical Practices and Recommendations recorded in Classical and Post-classical Arabic Scholars Concerning the Copying and Correction of Manuscripts," in *Les Manuscrits du Moyen-Orient. Essais de codicologie et paléographie*, ed. François Déroche (Istanbul and Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1989), 51–60, on 56; Franz Rosenthal, *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1947), 7 and 36.

62 Cf. Anthony Grafton and Megan Hale Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), which includes the fullest bibliography on the subject.

63 I discuss these in detail in "The Conundrum of Scriptural Plurality: The Arabic Bible, Polyglots, and Medieval Predecessors of Biblical Criticism," in *Editing the Hebrew Bible in the Variety of its Texts and Versions*, ed. Armin Lange, Andres Piquer, Pablo A. Torijano, and Julio Trebolle Barrera (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 56–85.

Hibat Allāh ibn al-ʿAssāl, a recurring figure in this study.[64] Prompted by the same wish to establish a linguistically superior and textually reliable version, in 1252 al-Asʿad produced a critical edition of the Arabic Gospels that was in use among the Copts. He explained his principles and technique in an epilogue.[65] As in the *Tafsīr* we are studying here, he noted the variant readings retrieved from a collation with Greek, Coptic, and Syriac translation traditions in the margins of his own Arabic translation of the Gospel using a comparable set of sigla, which he too designated *ʿalāmāt* in Arabic. His annotations included grammatical notes and text-critical observations in the margins. Al-Asʿad's notation system comprises a number of sigla: the letter /س/, for example, indicates readings from the Syriac (*suryānī*), /ر/ or /م/ from the Greek (*rūmī*), and /ق/ from the Coptic (*qibṭī*). Al-Asʿad also used these in combination to mark concurrent readings in different versions (e.g., /قسر/ occurring in Coptic, Syriac, and Greek).[66]

In the three manuscripts of the *Tafsīr*, glosses from the Samaritan translation (marked /س/ from *sāmira* "Samaritans") occur very rarely and even lack in the passages that are known for differences between the Samaritan and Masoretic texts. The siglum /ع/ for *ʿibrānī* "Hebrew" is the most common. Every verse has at least one reference to the Masoretic text; some have many. These note a more literal translation that must have been provided to the Coptic scholar by Abū al-Majd. For example, in an attempt to avoid anthropomorphism, in Genesis 1 Saadiah translated the verb "said" (*wa-yomer*) that denotes God's act of creation as "wanted" (*wa-shāʾa*). In our manuscripts, however, the literal translation *wa-qāl* "and he said" is added between lines and marked by the siglum /ع/. Additional examples are:

64 See: Wadīʿ Abullif, "al-Asʿad Ibn al-ʿAssal, Introduzioni alla Traduzione dei Quattro Vangeli," *Studia Orientalia Christiana* 34 (2006): 47–120; Wadīʿ, *Dirāsa ʿan al-Muʾtamin*; Samir Khalil Samir, "La Version arabe des Evangiles d'al-Asʿad Ibn al-ʿAssāl. Étude des manuscrits et spécimens," in *Actes du 4e Congrès International d'études Arabes Chrétiennes*, ed. Samir Khalil Samir (Kaslik: Université Saint-Esprit, 1994), 441–551; Kenneth E. Bailey, "Hibat Allah Ibn al-ʿAssāl and his Arabic Thirteenth-century Critical Edition of the Gospels (with special attention to Luke 16:16 and 17:10)," *Theological Review* 1 (1978): 11–26. A critical edition of al-Asʿad's translation was furnished by Samuel Moawad, *Al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraǧ Hibat Allāh ibn al-ʿAssāl: Die arabische Übersetzung der vier Evangelien* (Cairo: Alexandria School, 2014).

65 Duncan B. Macdonald, "Ibn al-ʿAssāl's Arabic Version of the Gospels," in *Homenaje á D. Francisco Codera en su Jubilación del Profesorado*, ed. Eduardo Saavedra (Zaragoza: M. Escar, 1904), 375–392.

66 Bailey, "Hibat Allah Ibn al-ʿAssāl," describes the system in detail.

	Saadiah/BNF, Ar. 1		/ع/		Hebrew
Gen. 1:16	للإضاءة	"to shine upon"	للتسلط	"to rule"	לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת
Gen. 13:1	القبلة	"[towards] the qibla"	الجنوب	"into the south"	הַנֶּגְבָּה
Exod. 1:15	واسم الأخرى	"the name of the other"	واسم الثاني	"the name of the second"	וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית

7 Saadiah's Translation Techniques

The second part of the preface describes four ways (*masālik*)—today we could call them "techniques"—prominent in Saadiah's approach to translation. It is well known that the exegesis embedded in Saadiah's *Tafsīr* is one of its major features. The *Tafsīr* attempts to reconcile the biblical text with halakhic practice and hermeneutic implications, on the one hand, and with the linguistic and stylistic requirements of the Arabic language, on the other, by omitting repetitive elements, condensing the narrative, and providing referential links through the insertion of temporal conjunctions. It accordingly takes great liberty with the formal structure of the Hebrew source and is anything but a literal rendering of the text.[67]

The first technique consists of interpretive additions. As shown by the previously mentioned case of Genesis 18:33, where Saadiah's "and the *messenger* of the Lord" introduces a mediating agent, these insertions are often meant to eliminate anthropomorphisms. Others clarify or gloss part of the biblical verse they occur in. Because they are extraneous to the Hebrew text, our editor marked them with the siglum /ز/; for example, in Genesis 2:17, *tastaḥaqqu an tamūt* "[for on the day that you eat from it] you will *be due to* die." Genesis 4:7 deals with the duty to resist the impulse to sin. Saadiah, using the terminology of contemporary rational theology (*kalām*) and in order to counter the notion of determinism, adds *bi-l-ikhtiyār* "out of free will" to the second part of the verse: "and you shall rule over it *out of free will*."

The second technique involves Saadiah's attempt to avoid repetition and to use pronouns instead of recurring elements or persons.[68] The author of the

67 Haggai Ben-Shammai, "The Tension between Literal Interpretation and Exegetical Freedom: Comparative Observations on Saadia's Method," in *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry Walfish, and Joseph Ward Goering (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 33–50.

68 On this issue, see Polliack, *Karaite Translations*, 239–241.

preface brings an example that is found in the Lot pericope: "And the two angels came to Sodom at evening; and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom" (Gen. 19:1). The Hebrew text refers to "Sodom" twice; but Saadiah replaces the second instance with a resumptive pronoun: "and Lot sat in *its* gate."

Various translation techniques fall into the third category. Among these are Saadiah's tendency to offer a translation that conforms to reason and rational interpretation. Because it is obvious that man and woman (i.e., husband and wife) are not literally one, but remain two distinct entities, Saadiah translated Genesis 2:24 as "and they shall be *as* one body." Also in this category is the substitution of a plural for a singular or of a specific for a more general term.

The fourth technique has to do with the elevated register of Saadiah's lexicon. As the author of the preface informs us, the word *ratt* has three meanings: (1) an eminent person, (2) wild swine, and (3) a speech impediment. Saadiah, however, uses it to render the Hebrew *par* "ox" or "bull"—a usage so rare that it must be deduced from the context.[69]

8 The Marginal Glosses

Another layer of the text-critical apparatus is provided in the marginal glosses, of which fullest set is found in COP, MS Bibl. 21. The glosses explain uncommon and unexpected Arabic expressions and provide clarifications to Saadiah's translation, as well as noting its dependence on or divergence from the Hebrew *Vorlage*. They also compare his translational approach with that used in the other sources at the disposal of our editor (see above). Here are a few examples from Genesis 1:

Gen. 1:2

> "ورياح الإله": باسيلوس يعتقدها روح القدس ومار أفرام يشير بها إلى الهواء ويجنح بأنّ كلام النبيّ إنما كان في كون الموجودات لا في الأقانيم، والسامرة وفرقة اليهود قالوا ملائكة والفرقة، الأخرى قالت إنّها الريح.
>
> "The spirit of God": Basil the Great maintains that this is the Holy Spirit, Mar Ephrem would have it refer to the element of the air, as supported

69 On this usage see Shehadeh, "A Non-Muslim Arabic Word"; Joshua Blau, *A Dictionary of Mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic Texts* (Jerusalem: The Academy of the Hebrew Language, 2006), 237.

by the words of the prophet [Moses, i.e., the biblical text], which made it clear that it is part of what was brought into existence and not part of the hypostasis. The Samaritans and some of the Jews say: It refers to the angels. Another group of the Jews says that it is the wind.

Gen 1:3

"فشاء": لفظة "شاء الله" في هذا الأصل في هذا المكان وما بعده هي بالعبرانيّ "وقال الله"، والنصارى والسامرة ذهبوا إلى ذلك، وكذلك "وعلم الله" أخرجها النصارى والسامرة وفرقة من اليهود "ورأى الله".

"And [God] wanted": The expression "God wanted" is used here in the original text [of Saadiah's *Tafsīr*]. This, however, is very far from the Hebrew, which says "and God said." Thus the Christians and the Samaritans translate it. In the same vein, he translated "and God knew" [for Hebrew "and God saw"], though the Christians, the Samaritans, and some of the Jews rendered it "and God saw."

Gen 1:7

الجَلَد: الأرض الصلبة.

"The firmament": This means the solid ground.

Gen 1:4

"ولمّا مضى الليل والنهار يوم واحد": نصّ العبرانيّ "وكان مساء وكان صباح يومًا واحدًا"، وكذلك الحال في بقية الأيّام الستّة والنصارى والسامرة وأكثر اليهود نقلوها أيضًا هكذا.

"And when the night and the day passed, it was the first day": The Hebrew text says "it was night and it was day, day one" and likewise it occurs for all other six days. Thus it was also rendered by the Christians, the Samaritans, and the majority of Jews.

9 Who Was the Anonymous Author? A Short Conclusion

The question that remains to be asked pertains to the identity of the scholar responsible for this project and author of the preface. Who was the Coptic intellectual who omitted his own name? In view of his access to such a diverse set of texts, I have already placed him in the ʿAssālid circle. Moreover, the trail that leads to the al-ʿAssāl family is not entirely accidental. It was the ʿAssālids who actively included Saadiah's *Tafsīr* in the ambit of their intellectual pursuits and thus likely paved the way for its admission to the canon of the Coptic Church. The critical edition of the *Tafsīr* has striking parallels with the endeavors of all members of the circle, but is most closely linked to al-Asʿad ibn al-ʿAssāl's critical and annotated edition of the Arabic Gospels. Both works use a complex system of sigla, referred to in both as *ʿalāmāt*, to indicate translational variants and the relation between source texts and their Arabic versions.

Nowhere in his surviving writings, however, does al-Asʿad mention a similar work on the Pentateuch. Even so, one detects a strong similarity between the epilogue to the Arabic Gospels and the preface to the Pentateuch. Both uphold the view that the biblical text remained unaltered and untampered in its transmission up to the time it was translated into Arabic. It was only then that textual distortions began to multiply, due to insufficient knowledge of Arabic or of the source language. For this, both texts use the Arabic term *taṣḥīf*. The need to establish a corrected and reliable version that eliminates these distortions was the incentive for the text-critical apparatus. The textual practices employed in the two works are very similar, with interlinear glosses that elaborate on different layers of the text (simple references to variants in other copies, *Vorlage* dependence, comparison with other biblical versions via Arabic translations thereof) and explanatory marginalia.

There are further parallels. In both cases, the author is attentive to additions (*ziyādāt*) or omissions (*nuqṣān*) in the Arabic translation. Faḍl Abū al-Faraj ibn al-Ṭayyib's commentaries serve as a point of reference to the Syriac version in the two texts. Finally, a mere ten years elapsed between two texts. The apparatus to the Gospels was completed in 1252, that to the Pentateuch in 1242 CE. Given all these, there are strong grounds for recognizing al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraj Hibat Allāh ibn al-ʿAssāl as the unnamed Coptic scholar responsible for the latter.

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CHAPTER 5

The Utility of Christian Arabic Texts for Qurʾānic Studies

Clare Wilde

1 Traditional Approaches to the Qurʾān

According to Islamic tradition, the Qurʾān—inimitable (Q 17:88) and in clear Arabic (e.g., Q 16:103)—was revealed to the prophet Muhammad between 610 and 632, in the Hijaz in Arabia. As the prophet himself was *ummī*[1] (perhaps meaning he was illiterate, a gentile, or lacking knowledge of biblical languages), his followers memorized, recited, and recorded the revelations. A generation after the prophet's death, the caliph ordered the collection of all records of the known verses and a single official codex—known as the ʿUthmānic version—emerged, in a contested process.[2] Islamic debates over the Qurʾān did not stop there. By the beginning of the ninth century, Muslims were debating the eternal versus created nature of God's speech. As with the codices of the Qurʾān, the caliph again weighed in, ordering all public officials to profess the created nature of the Qurʾān, but this caliphal inquisition was short lived.[3] In fact, normative Islam would later profess its "uncreatedness."[4]

1 Sebastian Günther, "Muḥammad, the Illiterate Prophet: An Islamic Creed in the Qurʾan and Qurʾanic Exegesis," *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 4 (2002): 1–26.

2 For a concise overview, see Michael Cook, *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); for a Christian Arabic account, see ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī, *Risālat ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ismāʿīl al-Hāshimī ilā ʿAbd al-Masīḥ ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī wa-Risālat al-Kindī ilā l-Hāshimī* (London: Bible Lands Missions' Aid Society, 1912). See the English edition in N.A. Newman, ed., *The Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue* (Hatfield, PA: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1993), 365–545, here 452–470; for a detailed discussion, especially in the Shīʿa tradition, see Hossein Modarressi, "Early Debates on the Integrity of the Qurʾān: A Brief Survey," *Studia Islamica* 77 (1993): 5–39.

3 On the *miḥna*, see John Nawas, "A Reexamination of Three Current Explanations for al-Maʾmun's Introduction of the Miḥna," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26 (1994): 615–629; see also Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: the Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Maʾmun* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Massimo Campanini, "The Muʿtazila in Islamic history and Thought," *Religion Compass* 6 (2012): 41–50.

4 As in the eleventh century caliphal edict preserved in Ibn al-Jawzī, Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī: *Al-muntaẓam fī taʾrīkh al-mulūk wa-l-umam*, ed. Fritz Krenkow, vol. 8 (Hyderabad 1938), 8:109–111. Translated in N. Calder, J. Mojaddedi, and A. Rippin, eds., *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook of Religious Literature* (London: Routledge, 2003), 159–162.

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Emphasis on the inimitable and uncreated nature of the Qur'ān elevated it above the status of a normal text. In fact, the status of the Qur'ān as Word of God in Islamic tradition has been likened to that of Christ, rather than the Bible, for Christianity. It could be recited and memorized for popular devotion, but its interpretation for legal or other purposes has traditionally been the provenance of scholars, as attested to by the classical works of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *tafsīr* (exegesis). While Sunni narratives have dominated scholarly discussions of the collection and codification of the Qur'ān in Islamic history, as well as in western scholarship,[5] they are becoming the subject of increased scholarly curiosity. Given the history of governmental interference in the transmission and understanding of the Arabic Qur'ān, the suppressed versions have been the subject of scholarly and confessional interest. Since the 1970s, scholars have questioned the traditional narratives about the timeframe and location of the initial Arabic Qur'ān,[6] re-examining qur'ānic familiarity with Late Antiquity,[7] as well as hoping to find some traces of the contents of the suppressed codices.[8]

Although the Qur'ān is generally recognized as the first Arabic book,[9] even if it was the result of an all-too-human redaction process, Islamic and Christian traditions preserve doubts about the details of the traditional Islamic account of the qur'ānic revelation. Why would God have revealed a clear Arabic revelation to the barely literate Arabs of the Hijaz?[10] A second line of criticism is the qur'ānic relationship to Jewish and Christian lore. Given its familiarity with Syriac and Aramaic traditions, the Qur'ān has been criticized as

5 See Modarressi, "Early Debates," for an excellent overview of historic Shi'a disputes with the received text.

6 Most noteworthy are Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); and John Wansbrough, *The Sectarian Milieu: Content and Composition of Islamic Salvation History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

7 Patricia Crone, "Jewish Christianity and the Qur'ān (Part One)," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 74 (2015): 225–253; Gabriel Said Reynolds, "The Qur'ān and the Apostles of Jesus," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 76 (2013): 209–227; Emran El-Badawi, *The Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions* (London: Routledge, 2014); Holger Zellentin, *The Qur'ān's Legal Culture: The Didascalia Apostolorum as a Point of Departure* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2013).

8 Gerd Puin, "Observations on Early Qur'an Manuscripts in Sana," *Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science* 27 (1996): 107–112.

9 Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

10 'Abd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī, *Risāla*; Newman, ed., *Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, here 460–465.

merely an Arabized version of Christian or Jewish legends.[11] Finally, the earliest qur'ānic archaeological inscriptions are dated to the late seventh century; the most reliably dated early manuscripts are contemporaneous with the earliest manuscripts of the prophetic biography and the collections of ḥadīth (eyewitness accounts of Muhammad's words and deeds). But these are all datable to a century or so after 'Uthmān's purported codification.[12] It is also about this time that the earliest datable Christian Arabic texts emerge.[13]

2 Christian Arabic

Despite its intimate connection with the Qur'ān, Arabic has been the language of many peoples, not just Arabs, and not just Muslims. Christians, for example, were often employed as scribes in the caliphal court, and were instrumental in the translation of Greek texts (often via Syriac) into Arabic.[14] But, due to their Christian theological subject matter and non-adherence to the rules of classical Arabic grammar, Arabic texts authored by Christians are frequently overlooked by Arabists and Islamicists (a recent study estimates that 90% of Christian Arabic texts have yet to be studied).[15] In fact, speaking of the broader category in which Jewish and Christian Arabic texts are often classified, Joshua Blau states: "It is obvious that only in very exceptional cases will one start the study of Arabic with Middle Arabic."[16] Middle Arabic has been understood in a

11 Emran El-Badawi, "The Impact of Aramaic (especially Syriac) on the Qur'ān," *Religion Compass* 8 (2014): 220–228; also in this category are reprints of classic essays, such as Abraham Geiger, "What Did Muhammad Borrow from Judaism?" in *The Origins of the Koran: Classic Essays on Islam's Holy Book*, ed. Ibn Warraq (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1998), 165–225, as well as classic polemics such as Daniel Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: Brill, 1972).

12 Gabriel Said Reynolds, "Le problème de la chronologie du Coran," *Arabica* 58 (2011): 477–502. See also Alba Fedeli's recent comment on the so-called "Birmingham Qur'ān" at https://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/collective-enthusiasm (Accessed 8 September 2018).

13 David Thomas, et al., *CMR* 1; Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1997).

14 For example, David Thomas, ed., *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule: Church Life and Scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th c.)* (London: Routledge, 1998).

15 Alexander Treiger, "The Fathers in Arabic," in *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Patristics*, ed. K. Parry (West Sussex: Blackwell, 2015), 442–455.

16 Joshua Blau, *A Handbook of Early Middle Arabic* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2002), 9.

variety of ways: almost as a "missing link" between classical Arabic and modern dialects,[17] as composed out of ignorance of, or disregard for, the standard rules of Arabic grammar, or as reflecting the distance between these formal rules and the colloquial language.[18]

Non-Muslims did not have confessionally-based reasons to admire the linguistic style of the Qurʾān. But as Arabic became the administrative language of the caliphate, those who had a basic level of literacy had practical reasons to adhere to the rules of Arabic grammar. Thus, despite doctrinal disagreements,[19] socio-economic or political dissatisfactions[20] and designations such as "Middle" or "Christian" Arabic, it is not always easy—or appropriate—to distinguish between the Christian and Islamic elements of the Arabic patrimony.[21] Christians and Muslims studied with the same masters, and disputed points of philosophy and theology together. In fact, a number of Arabic texts transcend confessional divisions.[22]

Christian Arabic literature[23] is by no means limited to Middle Arabic, or to Christian theological treatises. But Arabophone Christians did develop a rich theological literature in conversation with Muslims and other Christian denominations. Christian Arabic apologetic literature[24] is especially noteworthy for its willingness to use not just the Bible, but also the Qurʾān, in support of Christian truths. Unlike other Christians who responded to Islam, Christians who wrote in Arabic could engage the Arabic Qurʾān directly, sometimes even terming it among the books of God (*kutub allāh*).[25]

17 Blau, *Handbook*, 9.

18 Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Language* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press, 2014), 152–171.

19 Samir Khalil Samir and Jørgen S. Nielsen, eds., *Christian Arabic Apologetics during the Abbasid Period (750–1258)* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

20 For differing perspectives on the situation of non-Muslims under Muslim rule, see Bat Ye'or, *The Decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: From Jihad to Dhimmitude* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996); Timur Kuran, "The Economic Ascent of the Middle East's Religious Minorities: The Role of Islamic Legal Pluralism," *The Journal of Legal Studies* 33 (2004): 475–515; Anver Emon, *Religious Pluralism and Islamic Law: Dhimmis and Others in the Empire of Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

21 Richard Bulliet, *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

22 For example, Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq: The Reformation of Morals: A Parallel Arabic-English Edition*, ed. and trans., Sidney Griffith (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2002).

23 For a comprehensive overview, see Georg Graf, GCAL.

24 For discussion of these and other early Christian Arabic apologies, see Samir and Nielsen, eds., *Christian Arabic Apologetics*.

25 Sinai Arabic 434, ff. 171r, 181v, 174r, 175r.

3 Approaches to the Qur'ān in Christian Arabic Texts

Due to the intimate connection between the Qur'ān and the Arabic language,[26] all genres of Arabic texts written by Christians often "feel" qur'ānic, even if they are not explicitly engaging the qur'ānic text. Those that employ the qur'ānic text demonstrate a range of approaches to the Arabic revelation, from critical (such as the letter of ʿAbd al-Masīḥ ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī)[27] to conciliatory (like aspects of the texts under discussion here). Christian Arabic apologies frequently take the literary form of a dialogue text in which a Christian is portrayed in communication with a Muslim or a group of Muslims.[28] The following examples are drawn from three such texts, all from the Melkite community (Chalcedonian Christians who came under Arab Muslim rule).

The first text is attributed to the early ninth-century bishop of Harran, Theodore Abū Qurra.[29] He was summoned by the caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 819–833)[30] to debate a number of Muslim notables on the veracity of the Christian religion. The discussion ranges from points of Christian doctrine that are not compatible with Islamic belief (e.g., the divinity of Christ) to pointed attacks on the weaknesses of Islamic faith (e.g., if God is just, what is the eschatological reward for Muslim women if their husbands are promised houris in paradise?). In this debate, the Muslim notables are vanquished—and not just because of Abū Qurra's familiarity with points of Christian doctrine and his ability to

26 Kees Versteegh, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought Volume III: The Arabic Linguistic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2013); Jonathan Owens, "The Arabic Grammatical Tradition," chapter 3 of *The Semitic Languages*, ed. R. Hetzron (New York: Routledge, 1997, digital 2005): 46–58; M.A. Abdel Haleem, *The Qur'ān* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); C.H.M. Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'ānic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

27 ʿAbd al-Masīḥ al-Kindī, *Risāla*; Newman, ed., *Early Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, 365–545.

28 For further discussion of this genre, see Sidney Griffith, "The Monk in the Emir's Majlis: Reflections on a Popular Genre of Christian Literary Apologetics in Arabic in the Early Islamic Period," in *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam*, ed. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), 13–65.

29 Ignatius Dick, ed., *La discussion d'Abū Qurra avec les ulémas musulmans devant le calife al-Ma'mūn*. (Aleppo: n.p., 1999). Twenty-six manuscripts of the text are known, dating from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries, in two recensions: Melkite and Jacobite. For the manuscript history of the text, see Griffith, "Monk in the Emir's Majlis," 38–39. See an English translation and study of this text in Wafik Nasry, *The Caliph and the Bishop: A 9th century Muslim-Christian debate; al-Ma'mūn and Abū Qurrah* (Beirut: CEDRAC, 2008).

30 On the historicity of the encounter between Abū Qurra and al-Ma'mūn, see Sidney Griffith, "Reflections on the biography of Theodore Abū Qurrah," *Parole de l'Orient* 18 (1993): 143–170, here 156–158.

explain their validity. His victory is also attributable to a deep knowledge of the Qur'ān itself, an ability to employ it in defense of Christian doctrines, and to critique it.[31]

The second text[32] is the response of the twelfth-century Paul of Antioch,[33] bishop of Sidon, to Muslim friends in his episcopal see. Having voyaged to Byzantine and Frankish lands, including Rome and the Amalfi coast, Paul wished to explain why these foreign Christians saw no need to become Muslim.[34] He uses the Qur'ān to best any objections a Muslim might pose to the positions voiced by these "foreign" Christians.

The final text is preserved in a unique manuscript (Sinai Arabic 434, ff. 171r–181v, copied in 1138–1139), a microfilm copy of which is housed in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. This manuscript contains the response of an anonymous Melkite monk of Jerusalem to three questions posed by a Muslim sheikh. The sheikh has read a "Refutation of the Christians," and wants the monk's expert opinion on three questions concerning (1) the relationship of the eternal being of God to the three persons of the trinity; (2) the hypostatic union of God and man in the person of Christ; and (3) the proof of this hypostatic union in the actions of Christ. In his response, this monk, who lived in pre-Crusader Jerusalem,[35] employs both biblical and qur'ānic "proof" in support of Christian doctrines.

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31 Dick, ed., *La discussion d'Abū Qurra*, 80.

32 Paul Khoury, ed. and trans., *Paul d'Antioche: Évêque melkite de Sidon* (*XIIe s.*) (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique Beyrouth, 1965); cited hereafter with the paragraph number Khoury assigned to Paul's text, as follows: "Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, par. _"; English trans.: Sidney H. Griffith, "Paul of Antioch," in *The Orthodox Church in the Arab World* (*700–1700*)*: An Anthology of Sources*, ed. Samuel Noble and Alexander Treiger (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 216–235. See also David Thomas and Rifaat Ebied's publication of a parallel text: *Muslim-Christian Polemic during the Crusades: The* Letter from the People of Cyprus *and Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī's Response* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) and the comprehensive discussion in Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella, *Muslim-Christian Polemics across the Mediterranean: The* Splendid Replies *of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

33 For further discussion of Paul's life, see Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*.

34 This work may well have been the text to which Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) wrote his famous *Refutation of the Christians*. See Thomas Michel's edition and translation of Ibn Taymiyya's work: *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's* al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ (Delmar: Caravan Books, 1984).

35 Robert Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes 750–1050* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985), 38. He dates the text to 780 (see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 504–505). A ninth-century date is suggested by Mark Swanson, "Beyond Prooftexting: Approaches to the Qur'ān in Some Early Arabic Christian Apologies," *The Muslim World* 88 (1988): 297–319, here 301, n. 25.

Each text has its own tone and they have various manuscript traditions: Sinai Arabic 434 is a unique manuscript for which there is, as yet, no published translation or critical edition, while Paul's and Theodore's tracts are found in various manuscripts, and both have been edited and translated. Yet all three of these texts skillfully intertwine elements familiar from Islamic tradition with Christian theological arguments (e.g., debates over the created or uncreated nature of the Word of God). Each is dialogic in nature: Christians converse with Muslims, defending their faith against the charges and/or inquiries of their Muslim interlocutor(s). They were selected for their relatively respectful engagement with the Qur'ān.

4 Prooftexting

The majority of qur'ānic passages[36] in these three texts are, to borrow a phrase from Mark Swanson, "proof-texts." Qur'ānic passages may be quoted in part or in full, but are always read with a Christian or Christianizing gloss. In addition to arguments from reason and Greek philosophy, they selectively employ qur'ānic passages to prove their points. This approach to the Qur'ān disregards traditional Muslim interpretations of the given passages (Muslims are, in fact, portrayed as criticizing Christians for such selective use of the Qur'ān in Paul's text).[37] Much as Christians mined the Hebrew Bible for "proofs" that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, Arabophone Christians found qur'ānic proof texts for the veracity of Christianity. Much as Muslims criticized Jews and Christians for mishandling their original scriptures, a common technique in Arabophone Christian apologies was to claim that Muslim interpretation was erroneous, not the Qur'ān itself. For, if Muslims read the Qur'ān correctly, they would see that it confirms Christian truths, such as the divine sonship of Christ or the veracity of the gospel.

Christian prooftexting is facilitated by the extensive qur'ānic allusions to Christianity.[38] Although Christians in various times and places have tended to dismiss the Qur'ān as merely reflecting, or informed by, heretical forms of

36 See Clare Wilde, *Approaches to the Qur'ān in Early Christian Arabic Texts* (Palo Alto: Academica Press, 2014) for a comprehensive list of the qur'ānic passages employed by these authors.

37 Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, pars. 45–47.

38 There is a succinct overview in Sidney Griffith, "Christians and Christianity," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 6 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1:307–316.

Christianity,[39] it can also be read as an intentionally polemical text. For example, in its allusions to Jesus and his mother, the Qur'ān appears to be playing on, or responding to, Late Antique Christological debates[40]—disputes over which Christians remain divided until today.

Christian Arabic prooftexting of the Qur'ān ranges from wholesale adoption of some qur'ānic passages to selective reading or ingenious rewording of others. This can extend to qur'ānic accounts that are not found in the canonical New Testament, but which can be read as supporting Christian theology: qur'ānic accounts of Jesus speaking from the cradle or fashioning a bird from clay[41] (Q 3:45–49; 5:110) are cited along with biblical and pagan proofs for Christ's divinity. But the Christian Arab understanding of these miracles is not always faithful to the qur'ānic wording that these miracles were only possible through the *idhn Allāh* (permission of God). Playing on the qur'ānic wording, the anonymous monk of Jerusalem[42] blithely rereads the qur'ānic text as the miracle occurring *bi-idhn lāhūtihi* ("by the power of his divinity").

Prooftexting is also employed at the level of interpretation, without any rereading or emending of the qur'ānic text. For example, the initial verses of Q 2 prompted much exegetical discussion: why is it "that (*dhālika*) book, in which there is no doubt" if it is, in fact speaking of itself? Should it not have referenced "this" (*hādhā*) book? The Christian gloss provides a simple, if disingenuous, solution. For, the chapter begins with three letters: *a-l-m*.[43] As these are the first three letters of "*al-masīḥ*" (the Messiah), the Qur'ān—if the Muslims only heard it correctly—is praising the veracity of the Gospel! "*Alif—lām—mīm* (read: the Messiah). That book, in which there is no doubt (read: the Gospel) a guide for the pious …" This is a far cry from the common Islamic interpretation of this passage as a reference to the Qur'ān itself.[44]

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39 John of Damascus, *Heresy of the Ishmaelites*.

40 Neal Robinson, "Jesus and Mary in the Qur'ān: Some neglected affinities," *Religion* 20 (1990): 161–175.

41 For a pre-Islamic version of the story, see the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas* 15:1–7.

42 Sinai Arabic 434, ff. 177v.

43 For further discussion of the disconnected letters that begin some chapters of the Qur'ān, see Keith Massey, "A New Investigation into the 'Mystery Letters' of the Qur'ān," *Arabica* 43 (1996): 497–501 and Devin Stewart, "The Mysterious Letters and Other Formal Features of the Qur'ān in Light of Greek and Babylonian Oracular Texts," in *New Perspectives on the Qur'ān: The Qur'ān in Its Historical Context 2*, ed. Gabriel Said Reynolds (London: Routledge, 2011), 323–348.

44 Sinai Arabic 434, ff. 178v–179r; Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, par. 16; see also Theodore's invocation of this passage in his "Confirmation of the Gospel" in John Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 51; for Jewish approaches to

Christian Arabic prooftexting also employs selective reading of certain passages, or of Muslim interpretive traditions critical of Christianity. In their allusions to qur'ānic passages that contain explicit criticisms of Christian doctrine, our authors frequently ignore segments critical of Christian praxis or belief, and focus on those elements that, in fact, accord with Christian doctrine. Q 4:171 is a case in point: in the course of their discussions, all three of our authors emphatically assert their monotheism (and Christology), repeatedly utilizing the combination of God's "Spirit" (*rūḥ*) and "Word" (*kalima*) of the verse ("Jesus, son of Mary, was a messenger of God and his word, which he conveyed to Mary and a spirit from him")—effectively overlooking the passage's criticisms of Christian beliefs ("do not exaggerate in your religion" and "do not say three" and "exalted is [God] above having a son").

In keeping with their generally respectful tone and their own apologetic agenda, these re-readings are careful not to criticize the Qur'ān; that criticism which is apparent is leveled at the later Muslim community, for misinterpreting the qur'ānic meaning (especially regarding Jesus as the Messiah). Given their apologetic agenda and frequent adjustments of qur'ānic wording to suit their own theological views, Christian Arabic re-readings of qur'ānic passages are unlikely to yield reliable information on the precise form in which their authors knew the Qur'ān. These texts do, however, give valuable information about the familiarity of Christian Arabs with the Qur'ān, the freedom with which they quoted it, and the fact that Christians and Muslims did not necessarily read the Qur'ān in isolation from each other. For, even though Christian Arabic re-readings of these qur'ānic passages do not conform to Muslim interpretations, classical works of Islamic exegesis indicate some familiarity with Christian interpretive frameworks.[45] Furthermore, Christian Arabic apologies often require an awareness of Islamic theology to be fully understood, as with the aforementioned play on *idhn Allāh*.

5 *Contra Iudaeos*

A second aspect of these Christian Arabic dialogue texts is their continuation of ancient Christian "Contra Iudaeos" argumentation, arguments that also

these letters as signifying a false prophet, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It*, 505–508.

45 For example, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* (*Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*), ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī l-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 32 vols. in 16 (Cairo: n.p., 1933), ad Q 2:2–3.

occur in some Muslim glosses of qur'ānic passages, such as the identification of "those with whom [God is] angry" (Q 1:6) as the Jews.[46] Late Antique Christianity already used "anti-Jewish" strategies in their writings.[47] Before the Arabic Qur'ān appeared, Christians would argue that God was angry at the Jews for killing his prophets (1Thessalonians 2:14–16; Psalm 106/105:37–39).[48] The Qur'ān, as well as later Islamic interpretations, can therefore also be understood as engaging, or reflecting, Late Antique Christian-Jewish polemics, rather than as introducing some new form of anti-Jewish rhetoric.

Similarly, Jews and later Muslims could accuse Christians of "straying" from true monotheism,[49] such as when they profess their belief in the "son" of God, even if such discussions were framed in abstract theoretical philosophy. Indeed, to Late Antique observers, Christianity could have seemed a syncretism of a Semitic monotheism into a Greco-Roman polytheistic pantheon, rather than a strict Semitic monotheism.[50] In their defense of Christian faith, Christian Arab apologists not only made selective use of the qur'ānic distinction (Q 49:14) between true faith (*īmān*) and mere outward submission (*islām*), but also repeated tropes familiar from pre-Islamic Christian treatises on the truth of Christianity taken from anti-Jewish polemics. Rather than defending their fellow biblical adherents, these Christian Arabic debate texts denounced Jewish errors, including their rejection of Jesus and their killing of the prophets (glosses of Q 4:155) and worshipping the golden calf (Q 4:153).

Furthermore, Christian Arabic texts often appear more critical of Jews and Judaism than either qur'ānic passages or later Islamic interpretations—a tendency that one of Theodore's Muslim interlocutors challenges:

> I see you, the community of Christians, maintaining that the Messiah is your God and that the Jews crucified him. If the Jews did crucify him with

46 See the discussion of various glosses of this passage in Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al., eds., *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (New York: Harper Collins, 2015).

47 Guy Stroumsa, "From Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism in Early Christianity," in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy Stroumsa (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 1–26, here 5.

48 Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, pars. 19 and 24.

49 See for example Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān*, ed. Aḥmad Sāʿīd ʿAlī, et al., 30 vols. (Cairo: n.p., 1954–1957), ad Q 1:7 for Christians as those who are "astray."

50 On this theme, see Robert Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984); Peter Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992); or Peter Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

> his consent, then there is no crime imputable to them for it, but if it was without his consent, then he is a weak Lord.[51]

These Christian Arabic texts[52] refute common glosses of sūrat al-Fātiḥa, in which those who are "astray" (Q 1:7) are the Christians, but make no such efforts to correct traditional Islamic glossings of "those at whom [God] is angry" (Q 1:6) as applicable to the Jews.[53]

Christian Arab "anti-Semitism" is an understudied aspect of Christian anti-Semitism, Christian Arabic texts, and the history of Islamic "anti-Semitism."[54] Modern Arab (Muslim or Christian) anti-Jewish sentiment is entangled with geopolitical concerns, such as Zionism and the policies of the "Jewish" state of Israel. The anti-Jewish sentiments found in early Christian Arabic texts may also have had some basis in contemporaneous social realities. As Christians who came under Arab Muslim rule had to adjust their triumphal theology to accommodate the new reality of being not only second class citizens under Muslim rule, but also the socio-economic and political equivalents of Jews, some Christians who wrote in Arabic may have developed an even more virulent theological aversion to Judaism, to compensate for their lack of political power vis-à-vis "vanquished" Judaism. This may have been all the more true for the Melkites who, as Chalcedonian Christians, especially under Justinian, held a privileged position vis-à-vis Jews and heretics, including non-Chalcedonian Christians.[55] Given the conversance of Christians and Muslims in the early Islamic period, a deeper understanding of Christian Arabic contra-Iudaeos argumentation might shed light on the history of anti-Jewish rhetoric in the Islamic tradition.

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51 Dick, ed., *La discussion d'Abū Qurra*, 116.

52 Ibid., 75.

53 For example, the *tafsīr*s of Muqātil (d. 150/767) and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923).

54 For some relevant insights, see Sidney Griffith, "Jews and Muslims in Christian Syriac and Arabic Texts of the Ninth Century," *Jewish History* 3 (1988): 65–94; Bernard Lewis, *Semites and Anti-Semites: An Inquiry into Conflict and Prejudice* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986).

55 See for example Justinian's *Novella* 131, ch. 14 (dated to 545); English translation available on http://droitromain.upmf-grenoble.fr/Anglica/N131_Scott.htm (Last accessed 7 June 2016).

6 Intra-Muslim Debates

The third way in which Christian Arabic texts employ the Qurʾān is in their representation of Muslim beliefs, practices, and disputes that have no obvious bearing on Christian theological concerns. Such representations may occur as analogies to Christian theological dilemmas that Muslims criticize. For example, the Islamic attempt to reconcile God's multiple attributes (as exemplified in the qurʾānic names of God) with his oneness is employed by Christian Arabic authors in support of their argument that the Trinity does not compromise the oneness of God.[56] Elsewhere, Christian Arabs criticize Islamic beliefs or practices (e.g., belief in houris or accounts of the affair of Zayd's wife are common themes)[57] as a "response" to Muslim criticisms of Christianity (e.g., Christian suppression of bodily desires in asceticism and sexual abstinence[58]). The appearance of such themes in Christian Arabic texts attest to the conversance of their authors with Islamic tradition.

Given their authors' familiarity with Islamic traditions, a close reading of Christian Arabic texts may also provide insight to the historical context of the Qurʾān and its reception that may have been lost to normative Islam. For example, in the course of his debate, Abū Qurra addresses the charge that the Bible has been corrupted with an assertion that Q 108 (al-Kawthar) and Q 111 (which contains a curse on Abū Lahab and his wife, traditionally understood as relatives of Muhammad) are "something bearing no resemblance to inspiration and revelation. It is not true that your messenger said any of this."[59] Although Abū Qurra's text provides no further information as to the "real" provenance of these passages, or the reason for their appearance in the Qurʾān, this allusion to Q 108 and Q 111 in a Christian Arabic apologetic text is noteworthy on three accounts. First, the seeming ability of a Christian to criticize the qurʾānic text with apparent impunity strikes a modern reader for the freedom of expression—in Arabic—allowed under early ʿAbbāsid rule. Second, these passages have no bearing on the customary criticisms that Muslims would level at Christians. As such, this passing remark indicates that Christians who wrote in Arabic did not limit themselves to responding to Muslim criticisms of Christianity, but extended the scope of their polemics to points that Muslim themselves were debating. This leads to the third point: Abū Qurra's inclusion

56 For example, Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, par. 32.
57 For example, Dick, ed., *La discussion d'Abū Qurra*, 86.
58 Ibid., 123.
59 Ibid., 108.

of Q 108 and Q 111 in his apology, and the allusion to some connection between these two passages that is not readily apparent from Islamic tradition, indicates a familiarity with a debate in Islamic tradition that, presumably, his audience would have known. As such, this casual reference in a Christian Arabic text may help illuminate details of the reception history of the Qur'ān that the normative Islamic tradition may have lost.

While Q 108 and Q 111 are unlikely participants in Christian-Muslim theological debates, Muslim exegetes have devoted much ink to these brief sūras. Both have been used by Muslim exegetes to "prove" the miraculous or inimitable nature of the Qur'ān, while "heterodox" strains in the Islamic tradition also reflect doubts about their inimitable merits.[60] The conflicting traditions relating to these chapters indicate a history of tumultuous and varied interpretation. But—like much of early Islamic intellectual history—Islamic tradition is not forthcoming as to the reasons for the varied interpretations. The allusive nature of Abū Qurra's remarks indicates that he is echoing a discussion already present in his milieu; careful reading of this casual allusion in a Christian Arabic text might illuminate our understanding of the range of interpretations that have been present in Islamic tradition.

Although "al-Kawthar" (Q 108:1) has been the focus of much Islamic exegesis, Abū Qurra focuses on the identity of another word in the chapter, *al-abtar* ("the one without offspring"), tying it to Q 111, a chapter traditionally understood as a curse on one of Muḥammad's uncles.[61] Although Islamic tradition has generally understood the "one without offspring" of Q 108:3 to be a certain Qurayshite opposed to Muhammad, the interpreter Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) records a minority understanding of *al-abtar* as referring to Abū Lahab, the individual explicitly cursed in Q 111.[62] In Islamic tradition, Abū Lahab is identified as one of Muhammad's uncles; as the qur'ānic curse demonstrates, prophetic kinship is not necessarily a guarantor of virtue—a potential problem for the ʿAbbāsids, who based their legitimacy in part on prophetic kinship. As Theodore's debate is set in the time of the early ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Ma'mūn, his allusion to doubts about the status of Q 111 and Q 108 may illuminate the background to the tradition preserved by al-Rāzī, as well as why both might have become disputed passages. As Christian Arabic texts were not subject to the dictates of normative Islam, careful reading of these texts in the light of Islamic tradition might

60 This is analyzed in Clare Wilde, "The Qur'ān: *Kalām Allāh* or words of man? A case of *tafsīr* transcending Muslim-Christian communal borders," *Parole de l'Orient* 32 (2007): 1–17.

61 For a discussion of scholarship on this sūra, see Uri Rubin, "Abū Lahab and Sura CXI," in *The Qur'ān: Style and Contents*, ed. A. Rippin (Aldershot: Ashgate 2001), 269–286.

62 Rāzī, *Tafsīr* ad Q 108:3.

shed light on how political intrigue, as well as linguistic merits, contributed to theological debates over the inimitability and created/uncreated nature of the Qurʾān.

7 Christian Arabic Texts and the Qurʾānic Muṣḥaf?

Recent finds of ancient Qurʾān manuscripts, either as palmipsests (in Sanaʾa) or misfiled in a library collection (in Birmingham)[63] have given scholars renewed hope of finding physical textual evidence of the form(s) in which the Qurʾān first circulated. Given their relatively early provenance and supposed freedom from caliphal regulation (or lack of concern for the dictates of normative Islam), Christian Arabic texts have also been posited as sources that preserved alternative verses circulating in early Qurʾāns. While Christian Arabic texts merit further study for the light they could shed on the form(s) in which early readers or auditors knew the Qurʾān, the larger polemical enterprise in which Christians were employing the Qurʾān must also be remembered. For example, in *Answers for the Shaykh*, the anonymous monk writes the "mysterious letters" at the beginning of Q 2 as "*al-mīm*"[64] instead of the customary usage of three separate Arabic letters: *ʾ—l—m*. Is this orthography more likely a literary device to underscore the point he is making, or a reflection of the qurʾānic text known to him? (Paul of Antioch's text uses the customary orthography in his discussion of this passage.)[65] Although Theodore Abū Qurra's text cites Q 108 and 111 with a few slight deviations from the received qurʾānic codex and known variant readings,[66] in the absence of other evidence, the variations are as likely to be scribal errors or evidence of citation from (faulty) memory (e.g., Q 111:4 is written with "foot" instead of "neck") as they are to be attestations to otherwise unattested versions of the Qurʾān. Given their casual attention to precise citation of the Arabic Qurʾān elsewhere, a claim for a Christian Arabic citation of a qurʾānic variant would need to have additional, external corroboration to be credible.

63 For concise popular overviews of both of these finds, see Toby Lester, "What is the Koran," *The Atlantic* (January 1999), available on https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/01/what-is-the-koran/304024 and Gabriel Said Reynolds, "Variant Readings: The Birmingham Qurʾān in the Context of Debate on Islamic Origins," *The Times Literary Supplement* (7 August 2015): 14–15, available on http://www.academia.edu/25775465/Variant_readings_The_Birmingham_Qur_an_in_the_Context_of_Debate_on_Islamic_Origins_Times_Literary_Supplement_7_Aug_2015_14-15.

64 Sinai Arabic 434, f. 178v.

65 Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, par. 16.

66 See the discussion in Wilde, "The Qurʾān: *Kalām Allāh* or words of man?"

8 Concluding Remarks: Christian Arabic Texts and Qur'ānic Studies

Textual manipulation and interpretation are longstanding devices used to trump an opponent's argument. Recognizing that the Bible of the Christians would not persuade Muslims, Christians turned to the Qur'ān for support of Christian doctrinal articulations.[67] They would use the Qur'ān much as they did the Bible or Greek philosophy, as a proof (*burhān*) in support of their own apologetic or polemical agendas. In this context, certain Christian Arabic texts are remarkable for both their conversance with Islamic tradition, as well as the seeming freedom with which they approached the qur'ānic text.[68]

That they may have abused this freedom, or become too adept in their apologetic *tafsīr*, may be indicated by the prohibition on Christians teaching the Qur'ān to their children found in some versions of the Covenant of Umar.[69] Nevertheless, particularly when Christians, in Arabic, allude to interpretations of the Qur'ān with which we are unfamiliar, we should listen closely. For Christians who were intent on defending the truth and virtue of Christianity, including their Scripture, would likely have been very attuned to, and may also have contributed to, any discussions of infelicities in the inimitable and uncreated Word of God. And, as they were not subject to the same strictures of normative Islam as their Muslim neighbors, these texts may provide us with information about the ways in which the Qur'ān has been interpreted—ways that normative Islam may have forgotten.

Building on the work of Sidney Griffith, this chapter has argued that qur'ānic passages found in early Christian Arabic texts—whether as prooftexts, contra-Iudaeos argumentation or reflection of intra-Muslim debates—when read in the light of Islamic tradition and their own apologetic or polemic agendas, illuminate our understanding of early approaches to the Qur'ān. Christian Arabic texts might therefore enhance qur'ānic scholars' understanding of the formative debates concerning the content, form, and nature of the Qur'ān.

67 Sidney Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), here 75–92.

68 Dick, ed., *La discussion d'Abū Qurra*, 72.

69 See the bibliography on the covenant in Clare Wilde, "We shall not teach the Qur'ān to our children," in *The Place to Go To: Contexts of Learning in Baghdad from the Eighth to Tenth Centuries*, ed. Jens Scheiner and Damien Janos (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 2014), 233–259.

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PART 2

Arabic Christian Responses to Islam and Muslim Interpretations of Christianity

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CHAPTER 6

Apocalyptic Ecclesiology in Response to Early Islam

Cornelia B. Horn

In response to the emergence of Islam as a political, social, and religious force, ancient Christian authors writing in Arabic composed new discourses with apocalyptic content or rewrote existing apocalypses in the course of translating them from other Christian Oriental languages into Arabic.[1] Some of these apocalypses are independent narratives.[2] Well-known among these is the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*.[3] Other examples are shorter apocalypses which were incorporated into non-apocalyptic narratives. In Christian Arabic literature, one example of such an incorporation is found in the *Arabic Apocryphal Gospel of John* (hereafter *AAGJ*).[4] This article studies aspects of the apocalypse in the *AAGJ* that are relevant for ecclesiological questions, broadly conceived.

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1 The research and writing of this article occurred in part while I held a Heisenberg Fellowship (GZ HO 5221/1–1) and in part during my tenure as the Heisenberg Professor of Languages and Cultures of the Christian Orient at the Martin-Luther-University, Halle-Wittenberg (GZ HO 5221/2–1). I wish to express my gratitude to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) for their financial support.

2 Sidney Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 23–44, considers the role of apocalypses as an initial Christian response to the challenge of the rise of Islam.

3 Gerrit J. Reinink, ed. and trans., *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius* (CSCO 540 and 541, Scriptores Syri 220 and 221; Louvain: Peeters, 1993). For the earlier edition of the Syriac text of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* as preserved in MS Vat Syr 58 see Harald Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion auf die einfallenden Muslime in der edessenischen Apokalyptik des 7. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt a. M., Bern, and New York: Peter Lang, 1985), 34–85, and Francisco Javier Martinez, "Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period. Pseudo-Methodius and Pseudo-Athanasius" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, 1985), 58–205. Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 129–161, provides a detailed discussion of the Syriac *Apocalpyse of Pseudo-Methodius*. See also Lutz Greisiger, "The Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius (Syriac)," in *CMR*, 1:163–171. Most scholars date the Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* to the second half of the seventh century. Some, for instance Michael Kmosko, "Das Rätsel des Pseudomethodius," *Byzantion* 6 (1931): 273–296, here 285, would date it considerably earlier in the seventh century.

4 For a facsimile edition of the text of MS Ambrosiana Arabice E 96 sup. of the *Arabic Apocryphal Gospel of John* and a Latin translation, see Iohannes Galbiati, *Iohannis evangelium apocryphum arabice* (Milan: In aedibus Mondadorianis, 1957). An Italian translation is available in Luigi Moraldi, *Vangelo Arabo apocrifo dell'Apostolo Giovanni da un Manoscritto della*

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Typifying the apocalyptic genre, Arabic apocalypses assume a persecuted group, to whom they tell tales of immanent trial in order to exhort their audience to resist and continue to do so. It is the armies of the Zoroastrians and later of the Muslims who are the instruments of a divine winnowing of the faithful from the infidels-at-heart who abandon the true cause. This genre requires a victory for the persecuted faithful, and these apocalypses attempt to remain true to form in this regard.[5]

In Arabic literature from the Syriac milieu, apocryphal gospels rarely contain apocalypses. Indeed, the *AAGJ*, the apocalyptic portion of which has remained neglected thus far, is the only known example. In Syriac literature, the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles* includes three apocalypses, attributed each to Simon Peter, James, and John, with a summary presentation of the four canonical gospels.[6] If this work was translated into Arabic, no copies seem to survive.

There are two witnesses of the *AAGJ* known at present: MS Sinai Arab. 441, dated 1196, and MS Ambrosiana Arabice E 96 sup. (Hammer 93), dated 1342.[7] This work contains a sizeable portion of apocalyptic material that has been incorporated into the framework of a world-history beginning with Adam and Eve and culminating with Jesus' life and the end of Mary's life after Jesus' ascension. Several subsections of varying length feature apocalyptic material in the form of discourses. One can identify four separate apocalyptic blocks

Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book, 1991). An English translation is in preparation. For a discussion of significant aspects of the work and the manuscript evidence, see Cornelia Horn, "Editing a Witness to Early Interactions between Christian Literature and the Qur'ān: *Status Quaestionis* and Relevance of the *Arabic Apocryphal Gospel of John*," *Parole de l'Orient* 37 (2012): 87–103.

5 For introductory comments, definitions, and discussion concerning the nature of apocryphal apocalyptic writings in the tradition of early Christian literature, see, for instance, Philipp Vielhauer and Georg Strecker, "Apokalypsen und Verwandtes. Einleitung," in *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen. 5. Auflage. II. Apostolisches, Apokalypsen und Verwandtes*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 491–547.

6 For the edition and English translation of the single manuscript (MS Syr Harris 85; dated palaeographically to about the eighth century) that preserves the text, see J. Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles together with the Apocalypses of Each One of Them* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900; reprinted Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2003). For discussion, see Han J.W. Drijvers, "The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles: A Syriac Apocalypse from the Early Islamic Period," in *The Byzantine and early Islamic Near East. I. Problems in the Literary Source Material*, ed. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton, New Jersey: Darwin Press, 1992), 189–213; and Han J.W. Drijvers, "Christians, Jews and Muslims in Northern Mesopotamia in Early Islamic Times. The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles and Related Texts," in *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam. VIIe–VIIIe siècles*, ed. Pierre Canivet and Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1992), 67–74.

7 See further information and discussion in Horn, "Editing a Witness."

of text.[8] These amount to roughly one quarter of the length of the text of the *AAGJ*.[9] Within the scope of these four sections, several topics impress upon the reader the existential challenge which the emergence of the new religion of Islam and its cultural forces brought about for the community of the Christian church.

Comparative study of parallels and differences in motifs between this and other medieval Christian apocalypses, both in Arabic as well as in other Christian Oriental languages, demonstrates a recognizable relationship between this apocalypse and both the Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* and the so-called *Edessan Apocalyptic Fragment*, also in Syriac.[10] In addition, there are similarities between the *AAGJ* and (Pseudo-)Ephraem's verse homily *On the Antichrist*,[11] the *Apocalypse of John the Little* which is appended to the *Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*,[12] and the *Syriac Alexander Legend*.[13] For these latter

8 These are to be found in chapters *AAGJ* 30, 32, and 36–38.

9 This material comprises about 29 of a total of 117 single-spaced pages of a draft English translation by Robert Phenix and the present author.

10 For the text of the *Edessan Apocalyptic Fragment*, see François Nau, "Révélations et légendes. Méthodius—Clément—Andronicus," *Journal Asiatique* ser. 11, 9.3 (1917): 415–471, here 425–434 (Syriac) and 434–446 (French). Nau incorrectly understood the *Edessan Apocalyptic Fragment* to be the model or source of the Syriac text of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*. For a reedition of the text, accompanied by an English translation and comments, see Martinez, "Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period," 206–246. For a subsequent English translation, see Sebastian Brock, "The Edessene Apocalyptic Fragment," in *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993), 243–250. Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 86–97 and 162–174, offers a German translation.

11 At times, scholars also refer to this text as the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Ephraem*. For the edition and translation of the work, see Edmund Beck, ed. and trans., *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III* (CSCO 320 and 321, Scriptores Syri 138 and 139; Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1972), 60–71 (Syriac) and 79–94 (German). Quite independent of the question of the authenticity of the sermon *On the Antichrist* as a work of Ephraem, it is clear that verses 73–168 (sections three and four in Suermann), which predict the coming of Islam, cannot come from the pen of the fourth-century Syriac deacon. See the discussion in Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 111–129, with references to earlier literature, as well as Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syrers Sermones III*, CSCO 321, ix–x.

12 See the edition and translation in Rendel Harris, *The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles*, ܟ-ܡ (Syriac) and 34–39 (English).

13 For the text and translation of the *Syriac Alexander Legend*, see Ernest Alfred Wallis Budge, *The History of Alexander the Great, Being the Syriac Version. Edited from five manuscripts of the Pseudo-Callisthenes, with an English translation, accompanied by an historical introduction on the origins and the various oriental and European versions of the fabulous History of Alexander, with notes, glossary, appendixes, variant readings and indexes* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1889; reprinted Amsterdam: APA-Philo Press, 1976), 255–275 (Syriac) and 144–158 (English). See also the discussions in Károly Czeglédy, "The Syriac Legend con-

three texts, Michael Kmosko claimed they were dependent on the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Matthew*,[14] extending the observations of Francisco Javier Martínez, who had identified earlier a dependency on the *Apocalypse of John the Little*.[15]

The *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, a Syriac work of the mid-to-late seventh century,[16] is attested in five manuscripts. The oldest of these is MS Beinecke Syriac 10, held in Yale's Beineke Library, which dates to 1224/5 and which constitutes the oldest witness for the integrated Syriac text, not taking into account here citations in other Syriac writers. Vatican MS Syr. 58, folios 118v–136v dated 1584[17] is part of a larger manuscript compiled in 1586.[18] Three witnesses come from Mardin.[19] Yet only two of these are dated, one to 1365 (MS Mardin Orth. 368) and another one to 1956 (MS Mardin Orth. A). These manuscripts were difficult or impossible to access for a long time.[20]

One line of transmission of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* runs from Syriac via Greek to Latin, with the oldest Latin manuscript, MS Bern Burgerbibliothek 611, dated to 727, being the oldest witness to this apocalypse in any language.[21] In comparison, the oldest Greek manuscript, MS Vat. Gr. 1700, dates

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cerning Alexander the Great," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 7 (1957): 231–249; Gerrit J. Reinink, "Die Entstehung der syrischen Alexanderlegende als politisch-religiöse Propagandaschrift für Herakleios' Kirchenpolitik," in *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Albert van Roey*, ed. Carl Laga, Joseph A. Munitiz, and Lucas van Rompay (Leuven: Peeters and Dep. Oriëntalistiek, 1985), 263–282; and Emeri Johannes van Donzel and Andrea Schmidt, with a contribution by Claudia Ott, *Gog and Magog in Early Eastern Christian and Islamic Sources. Sallam's Quest for Alexander's Wall* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 17–21.

14 Kmosko, "Das Rätsel des Pseudomethodius," 296.

15 Martinez, "Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period," 6–7.

16 Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 129 and 159–161; Gerrit J. Reinink, "Ismael, der Wildesel in der Wüste. Zur Typologie der Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodios," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 75.2 (1982): 336–344, here 336–337 and 344; and Reinink, ed. and trans., *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, CSCO 540, xv.

17 Reinink, ed. and trans., *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, CSCO 540, xv.

18 Martinez, "Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period," 8–9.

19 Reinink, ed. and trans., *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, CSCO 540, xiv–xix.

20 For the third manuscript, MS Mardin Orth. 891, Martinez, "Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period," 10, did not provide a date. Arthur Vööbus, "Discovery of an Unknown Syriac Author, Methodius of Peṭrā," *Abr-Nahrain* 17 (1976/77): 1–4, who announced the discovery of the three Mardin manuscripts, did not recognize the identity between the author of these texts and Pseudo-Methodius.

21 W.J. Aerts and G.A.A. Kortekaas, ed. and trans., *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius. Die ältesten griechischen und lateinischen Übersetzungen. Vol. 1: Einleitung, Texte, Indices Locorum et Nominum* (Louvain: Peeters, 1996), 50 and 53.

to 1332/3.[22] The eighth-century date of the earliest Latin manuscript, which is two translations removed from the Syriac, supports a late-seventh-century *terminus ad quem* for the *Urtext*.

Gerrit Reinink argued that none of the five Syriac manuscripts, which have been identified thus far, presents the original text of the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*.[23] Lacking access to the Mardin and Yale manuscripts, Martínez's *editio princeps* was founded upon MS Vat. Syr. 58, folios 118v–136v. That manuscript as a whole contains Syriac and Karshuni texts and dates in part to 1584 (AGr 1895), and in part to 1586 (AGr 1897).[24] The portion, in which one finds the Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*, dates to 1584.[25] For his 1993 critical edition, Reinink collated the Vatican and Yale manuscripts. François Nau edited the closely related *Edessan Apocalyptic Fragment* on the basis of both MS Paris Syr. 350, fols. 98–105, dated to 1645/6, and MS Cambridge Add. 2054, fols. 1–2, dated to the eighteenth century.[26]

The earliest manuscript of the *AAGJ* predates the oldest of these manuscripts by 29 or 30 years. Based on several criteria, the current consensus is that the *AAGJ* was translated between 800 and 1000 from a Syriac *Vorlage*.[27] It is possible that some of the apocalyptic traditions, to the contours and contents of which we now have access in the Syriac apocalyptic texts, may have been in contact with the apocalyptic material contained in the *AAGJ*. At the least, the evidence of the apocalyptic sections of the *AAGJ* holds out the possibility that it witnesses to a trajectory of the reception of the *Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* in the Christian Oriental realm. Tracing the precise lines of the details of such dependencies and the directions of such transmissions is a task for a separate undertaking. It certainly has to be a part of a "comprehensive history of Christian apocalyptic literature," one that Martínez envisioned as a future project, to be tackled after much initial groundwork would have been accomplished.[28]

22 Aerts and Kortekaas, *Die Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, 38.

23 Reinink, ed. and trans., *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, CSCO 540, ix.

24 Martinez, "Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period," 8–9.

25 Reinink, ed. and trans., *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, CSCO 540, xv.

26 Nau, "Révélations et légendes," 425–434 (Syriac) and 434–446 (French). For a brief discussion of the relevant passage in Ms. BnF 350, see also François Nau, "Notices des manuscrits syriaque, éthiopiens et mandéens, entrés à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris depuis l'édition des catalogues," *Révue de l'Orient Chrétien* 16 (1911): 271–314, here 302–305, especially 304.

27 Horn, "Editing a Witness," 91–92, with further references.

28 Martinez, "Eastern Christian Apocalyptic in the Early Muslim Period," ii.

1 Cultural Identity and Christian Faith in the Face of the Inimical "Other"

The apocalyptic section that is contained in the *AAGJ* offers a colorful assemblage of features that characterize the inimical other, of whom Christ is said to have warned his followers. The face of the hostile "other" is presented under two different guises: that of the pagan and that of the Jew. In the first set of ideas, those who are expected to come and kill the Christians "in every region of the earth" are not identified as Jews or Christians, but as pagans, "a people who adores the idols of the gods,"[29] who prefer to attack at night and "take away as much as there is in your houses and leave you in misery,"[30] perhaps an echo of the New Testament apocalyptic trope, the thief in the night (Matthew 24:43 and 1 Thessalonians 5:1–3). Although the text holds out the possibility that the Christians might be able to overcome enemy forces from Babylon and Persia,[31] it describes the greatest of the pagan enemies as "a corrupt onager, which will corrupt the entire earth."[32] The onager, that is, the wild ass, of Christian apocalyptic refers to the Arabs, the sons of Ishmael. This image, with its roots in Genesis 16:12b,[33] came to be used widely. The late-seventh-century Syriac author John Bar Penkaye referred to the Arabs as the wild ass in Book 15 of his *Rish Mellē*.[34]

Employing animal imagery allows our apocalypse to enhance the negative characterization of the enemy further. Thus, it compares the Arab army to "a rapacious bird, lying in ambush to snare [you]."[35] The Arabs are a "nation … full of animosity and hate, educated in furor and madness"[36] and "a hot-tempered people."[37] They are branded collectively as "the son of sin," coming up from the desert.

Our apocalypse expresses two ambitions of this enemy. The first is their hope to destroy "my temple, which is in Jerusalem."[38] Yet precisely identifying the

29 *AAGJ* 37.12.

30 *AAGJ* 37.16.

31 *AAGJ* 37.25.

32 *AAGJ* 37.26.

33 See auch Reinink, "Ismael, der Wildesel," 342–344.

34 See also Sebastian Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the late seventh century: Book XV of John bar Penkāyē's Rīsh Mellē," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987): 51–74; reprinted in Sebastian Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature, Theology* (London, 1992), ch. 2, 54 n. 19, and see pp. 58 and 73 for other formulations from Gen 16:12.

35 *AAGJ* 37.31.

36 *AAGJ* 37.33.

37 *AAGJ* 37.34.

38 *AAGJ* 37.31.

referent of the temple requires further comment. In the literary context of the *AAGJ*, Jesus' disciples are portrayed as having gathered around their master to listen to his apocalyptic sermon. Within this perspective, the reader is to understand the comment as a reference to the Jewish Temple. Yet in the historical context that is available to the audience of the *AAGJ*, hearers might have interpreted the reference to Christ's Temple differently. They would have thought either of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, or, metaphorically, of the Christian church and the Christian faithful. Thus, the eschatologically oriented, apocalyptic discourse concerned an element that had ecclesiological bearing: the fear of destruction threatened multiple dimensions of the Church, including its buildings and the very community of the faithful. Yet the second ambition had an ecclesiological trajectory. It aimed at preventing Christians from "try[ing] to preach in every place dedicated to [Christ's] name."[39] The competition for Christians' attention through preaching alternative values and behavior norms was envisioned. Moreover, this competition was presented as occurring in the very spaces in which the Church manifests itself most visibly as *ekklesia*, as the one that is called and gathered together. The perceived threat to the community, which the enemy's actions posed, affected the Church's ability to gather as a church and proclaim its own teachings in its midst.

The second prominent characterization of the "other" demonstrates a strong anti-Jewish bias. The author(s) of the text expected, *ex eventu*, that "a great multitude of Jews will follow the people [of the enemy]."[40] The text argued that "the Jewish high-priests" would attempt to function as counselors of the enemy, even if enmity was predicted to arise between the Jews and the invaders.[41] Thus Christians were warned to "guard [them]selves against the Jews, and not to show them [their] secrets."[42] One express motivation is the Jews' desire for revenge against the Christians.[43]

The idea of Jewish support for the enemies' leaders is prominent in this apocalypse. Its audience were to expect a "king who will come from the desert of Tayman," that is, the south.[44] This king was understood to be under the influence of the Jews. Not only was he going to have "ministers and agents from among the Jews," but moreover, the "Jews will corrupt his institutions and will see to it to establish the law for those who follow him with the [law] which will

39 *AAGJ* 37.35.
40 *AAGJ* 37.40.
41 *AAGJ* 37.2.
42 *AAGJ* 37.40.
43 *AAGJ* 37.40.
44 See for instance Isaiah 21:1.

require hatred against [the Christians]."[45] A second leader of the enemy, whose arrival was expected, was "the son of perdition." His Jewish affiliations were said to be grounded in his origins from the tribe of Dan.[46] Moreover, he was to fulfill Jewish Messianic expectations, including that of working miracles that signaled the onset of a new age.[47] The text suggested to its readers that "[m]any of those who will follow him will be Jews, who will help in the destruction of those who believe in [Christ]."[48] Clearly, the language of a conspiracy depicting Jewish individuals as the true power behind non-Jewish enemies of Christianity is of ancient provenance. The text's audience was to understand the close association of Jews with Islamic leaders as a metaphor for the idea that Islam was a disguised revival of a Torah-based theocracy. Drawing upon a rhetorical trope which casts heretics and other undesirables as Jews, our apocalypse recommended keeping clear lines of separation between Christians and Jews in order to be able to preserve Christian identity and guard against the violation of the community. Thus, the apocalypse warned its audience to "guard [them]selves from the ferment of the priests among the Pharisees,"[49] and bewailed "those who associate with Jews, who are hateful to [Christ], and eat and drink with them." Christians who did not heed these warnings would face being joined to the Jews "on the day of judgment."[50] Such rhetoric attacked Muslims as those who deny the core tenet of Christianity, as well as Jews, who are seen as enablers of the Islamic leadership.

The apocalypse explained the phenomenon of those who left the community. Through baptism, "not one of those baptized in my [that is, Christ's] name will perish … because the baptized one does not deny me, unless he is a fruit of anathema led astray by Satan."[51] The biblical roots of such rhetoric, such as the parable of the wheat and the weeds (Matthew 13:24–30), are well-known. Our apocalypse makes explicit reference to this parable in assuring

45 *AAGJ* 37.41.

46 *AAGJ* 37.53.

47 *AAGJ* 37.53; "He is one for whom the Jews wait, indeed he will say concerning himself, 'See, the Messiah.' … he will perform wonders, the manifestations of which will deceive everyone and among his signs will be these: rains will come down, trees will break into leaf, and from them will come fruits in abundance."

48 *AAGJ* 37.54.

49 *AAGJ* 37.86.

50 *AAGJ* 37.93: "Woe to those who associate with Jews, who are hateful to me, and eat and drink with them. On the day of judgment, I will join them to them [i.e., the Jews]."

51 *AAGJ* 38.22: "that not one of those baptized in my name will perish except the son of perdition, because the baptized one does not deny me, unless he is a fruit of anathema led astray by Satan."

those who remain in the community that the weeds would be burned eventually.[52] Despite the prominent characterization of danger to Christian identity arising from the outside, our apocalypse was aware of internal threats to the preservation and continuation of the Christian community. Those threats were addressed in an exclamation of "woe" upon the ones "who will have mocked those who believe in [Christ]." The text formulated in the form of a prediction and threat of public shame in the heavenly realm that "on the day of judgment [Christ's] angels will mock them before all the nations."[53] The process of discerning who belonged to the Christian community and who did not was long and drawn out. The Parable of the Weeds (Matthew 13:24–30) already spoke of how the enemy would mix in weeds with the regular seeds during the work of sowing and cultivating the fields. In line with such thoughts, the *AAGJ* foresaw that for a while Christ would ignore the weeds in the field and thus allow the good seeds to grow up. In the end, however, the cockle would be burned.[54] It remained an open question, how many were those who were to be numbered among the weeds. One method of discernment which the text advocated was taking into consideration the sacrament of baptism as the saving sign. In the perspective of the *AAGJ* then, through the visible sign of baptism, threats that arose on the part of the inimical "other" against the structure and size of the community of the Church could be counteracted.

2 A Cross-Centered Christology and the Prominence of Relics of the Cross

Competition between Christians and Muslims who had conquered formerly Christian territories is a motif that features in the apocalyptic material contained in the *AAGJ* with references to Jerusalem as well as with references to the cross of Christ. The present discussion first explores the characterization of the concern of the *AAGJ* with the representation of Jerusalem in connection with apocalyptic discussions in the context of Christian-Muslim interactions.[55]

52 *AAGJ* 37.15.

53 *AAGJ* 37.92.

54 *AAGJ* 37.15.

55 The Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* 10.4 refers to Jerusalem as ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ, the "city of the saints" and the "city of the holy (places)." See Reinink, ed. and trans., *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, 22–23 (Syriac) and 38 (German), who renders the phrase as "Heilige Stadt" at both occurrences; and Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 60–61, who differentiates between "Stadt der Heiligen" in the first instance and "Stadt der heiligen Orte" in the second instance.

The text indicates, for instance, that "this great and numerous people," who have built their own house of prayer in Mecca as a rival to Jerusalem also "hope that my temple," a reference with which the text alludes to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, "which is in Jerusalem will be destroyed, but it will neither be destroyed nor will my [i.e., Jesus'] name there be diminished."[56] The comment's sensitivity to the potential decrease in veneration of Jesus' name in Jerusalem may refer to the diminishing number of Christian faithful in the city. Yet it may also reflect, and polemically react to, the challenge to the Christian declaration of Jesus as the Son of God, a challenge which became publicly visible when the inscriptions on the Dome of the Rock formulated, for instance, "Say He is God the one. God the eternal. He did not beget and is not begotten, there is none equal to him."[57]

The Christian veneration of Jesus was connected with the veneration of the cross. One finds ready references to the cross in Christian apocalyptic texts, for instance in the *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius*.[58] When compared to the apocalyptic material in the *AAGJ*, other apocalyptic texts focus less frequently on a concern about relics of the cross or on a theology of the crucifixion. Crucifixion is an apocalyptic indication of the community of true believers. Our apocalypse presents the crucifixion of Peter, the head of the apostles, as a symbol of the suffering community. Jesus predicts to Simon that he "will die the

56 *AAGJ* 37.31.

57 For the full text of the inscriptions of the Dome of the Rock, see Christel Kessler, "'Abd al-Malik's Inscription in the Dome of the Rock: A Reconsideration," *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1970): 2–14. For English translations, see for instance Robert G. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It. A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1997), 696–699; and Sheila S. Blair, "What Is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?" in *Bayt al-Maqdis: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, vol. 2: *Jerusalem and Early Islam*, ed. Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992–1999), vol. 1, 59–87, here 86–87. For discussions, see Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, 32–33; Oleg Grabar and others, *The Shape of the Holy. Early Islamic Jerusalem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 56–70; Gerrit J. Reinink, "Early Christian Reactions to the Building of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem," *Khristianskij Vostok* 2 (2002): 227–241, here 228–230. Josef van Ess, "'Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock: An Analysis of Some Texts," in *Bayt al-Maqdis: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, ed. Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 89–104, here 90 and 101, comments on how the building of the Dome of the Rock appropriated Jerusalem for the Muslims and posed an explicit challenge to the Church of the Anastasis, or the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, as it is more widely known in Western texts.

58 See the Syriac *Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius* 9.8–9 (ed. and trans. Reinink, *Die syrische Apokalypse des Pseudo-Methodius*, 20–21 [Syriac] and 32–34 [German]; Suermann, *Die geschichtstheologische Reaktion*, 56–59).

same death as" Jesus, that he "will be crucified on the wood of the cross" "in a large city."[59] The tradition of Simon Peter's crucifixion is a relatively early and widespread one, being attested for instance in comments Eusebius ascribed to Origen of Alexandria, as well as known from the *Martyrdom of Peter*, from Jerome's *On Illustrious Men*, and Pseudo-Abdias' sixth-century version of Peter's passion.[60] This tradition was well established in Syriac literature, for example in the Syriac version of the *Acts of Peter and Paul*.[61] The *AAGJ* implies crucifixion as a possible fate for persecuted Christians. However, the promise of salvation from death must refer to a spiritual or eternal death, which is the fate of those who leave the community willingly.[62]

Several passages in our apocalypse also reveal an explicit concern with the symbolism of the passion narrative of Jesus in the canonical gospels, including relics of the cross and of the crucifixion. Jesus informs the disciples of a victorious Christian king who will overpower the Arabs.[63] When the days of

59 *AAGJ* 37.12: "Know, Simon, [that] you will die the same death as I myself will die with the body I put on from Adam; and in a big city you will be crucified on the wood of the cross, as I will be crucified."

60 Eusebius, *Church History* 3:11, ed. and trans. Gustave Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres I–IV* (Sources Chrétiennes 31; Paris: Cerf, 1952), 97; *Martyrdom of Peter* 37–38, French trans. Gérard Poupon, "Actes de Pierre," in *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens I*, ed. François Bovon, Pierre Geoltrain, and Sever J. Voicu (Paris: Gallimard, Brepols, and AELAC, 1997), 1041–1114, here 1110–1111; Jerome, *On Illustrious Men* 1.2, trans. Thomas P. Halton, *Saint Jerome. On Illustrious Men* (FOTC 100; Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1999), 5; and Pseudo-Abdias, *Apostolic History*, book 1, ch. 20, text reprinted in John Allen Giles, *The Uncanonical Gospels and Other Writings, Referring to the First Ages of Christianity, in the Original Languages: Collected together from the Editions of Fabricius, Thilo, and Others* (London: Nutt, 1852), vol. 1, 277, and ed. and trans. David L. Eastman, "Pseudo-Abdias, *Passion of Saint Peter* (CANT 195 / *BHL* 6663–6664)," in *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts of Peter and Paul* (Atlanta: SBL, 2015), 67–101, here 98–99. See also Matthew C. Baldwin, *Whose* Acts of Peter*? Text and Historical Context of the Actus Vercellenses* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 70–71.

61 See, for instance, Anton Baumstark, *Die Petrus- und Paulusacten in der litterarischen Ueberlieferung der syrischen Kirche* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1902), 15, 20–21, 24, 29, 53, 55, and 66–71.

62 *AAGJ* 37.19: "Whoever will believe in me and remain firm in his faith, he will neither dissolve nor die, even if … if he is crucified."

63 On the motif of the so-called *Endkaiser*, see Paul J. Alexander, "Byzantium and the Migration of Literary Works and Motifs: the Legend of the Last Emperor," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 2 (1971): 47–68; Paul J. Alexander, "The Medieval Legend of the Last Roman Emperor and Its Messianic Origin," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 41 (1978): 1–15; Gerrit J. Reinink, "Die syrischen Wurzeln der mittelalterlichen Legende vom römischen Endkaiser," in *Non Nova, Sed Nova: Mélanges de civilization médiévale dédiés à Willem Noomen*, ed. Martin Gosman and Jaap van Os (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1984),

oppression draw to an end, a king will arise, empowered by Christ's spirit and hand-selected by him. The king will ride a mare "on which no one has gone out prior to him," an implied parallel to the colt on which Jesus entered Jerusalem shortly before his crucifixion in Mark 11:1–8 (parallels in Matthew 21:1–8, Luke 19:28–36, and John 12:14–15). An apocryphal interpretation of this canonical reference in our text explains that "the bridle of the mare will be the nails with which my [i.e., Jesus'] body was crucified on behalf of them."[64] The tradition that some of the nails that were used at Jesus' crucifixion were reused in the bridle of Emperor Constantine's horse is found in earlier sources, for instance in the *Ecclesiastical Histories* of Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Socrates Scholasticus.[65] These two sources state that another portion of the nails was incorporated into the emperor's helmet, a detail lacking in our apocalypse.

The king in question, called "the lord of my [i.e., Christ's] reign," "will go to Jerusalem and will set up the cross on which I was suspended, in the center of the earth, in the place where my body was crucified."[66] Such language

195–209; Harald Suermann, "Der byzantinische Endkaiser bei Pseudo-Methodius," *Oriens Christianus* 71 (1987): 140–155; Gerrit J. Reinink, "Pseudo-Methodius und die Legende vom römischen Endkaiser," in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, ed. Werner Verbeke, Daniël Verhelst, and Andries Welkenhuysen (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 82–111; Hannes Möhring, *Der Weltkaiser der Endzeit: Entstehung, Wandel und Wirkung einer tausendjährigen Weissagung* (Stuttgart: Thorbecke, 2000); András Kraft, "The Last Roman Emperor *Topos* in the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition" (MA thesis, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, 2011); András Kraft, "The Last Roman Emperor *Topos* in the Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition," *Byzantion* 82 (2012): 213–257; Gian Luca Potestà, "The Vaticinium of Constans: Genesis and Original Purposes of the Legend of the Last World Emperor," *Millennium-Jahrbuch* 8 (2011): 271–290; and Stephen J. Shoemaker, "The *Tiburtine Sibyl*, the Last Emperor, and the Early Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition," in *Forbidden Texts on the Western Frontier. The Christian Apocrypha in North American Perspectives*, ed. Tony Burke (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 218–244.

64 *AAGJ* 37.51.

65 See Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Ecclesiastical History* book 1, ch. 18, sect. 5, ed. Léon Parmentier and Günther Ch. Hansen, *Theodoret. Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 5 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1998), 64–65; and Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History*, book 1, ch. 17, ed. Günther Christian Hansen, *Sokrates. Kirchengeschichte*, GCS 1 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag and De Gruyter, 1995), 56–57. See also John W. Nesbitt, "Alexander the Monk's Text of Helena's Discovery of the Cross (*BHG* 410)," in *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations. Texts and Translations dedicated to the Memory of Nicolas Oikonomides*, ed. John W. Nesbitt (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 23–39, here 36–37. Also relevant for the Syriac tradition's reception and development of stories pertaining to the relics of the nails is the material in the Judas Kyriakos Legend. See Han J.W. Drijvers and Jan Willem Drijvers, ed. and trans., *The Finding of the True Cross. The Judas Kyriakos Legend in Syriac* (Louvain: Peeters, 1997), 50–53 (Syriac) and 68–71 (English).

66 *AAGJ* 37.55.

would have reminded a Christian reader of the more recent past, in particular of the return to Jerusalem of the relics of the cross following Emperor Heraclius' plundering of Shah Chosroe II's palace at Dastagird in 627/28; the Sassanians had already taken the cross after their capture of Jerusalem in 614 by General Shahrbaraz.[67] Yet the *AAGJ* continues, "[t]he light which I [i.e., Christ] have sent down above it [i.e., the cross] will rest on the tree of the cross, and on its peak, I will lift up the crown to heaven."[68] These three elements of the setting up of a cross at the place of Jesus' crucifixion, the descent of light from heaven, sent by Christ and illuminating, presumably, that very cross, and the crown placed on top of the cross and then lifted up, together with the cross, to heaven, reflect the tradition of the *Endkaiser*, an eschatological motif which was widespread in Christian literature. Our apocalypse claims that the Jews, both literally and as a collective figure for perceived and real enemies of the Christian religion, "will see the cross on the clouds of heaven,"[69] to which eschatological prediction Jesus adds that whereas the Jews will see the cross in the clouds, "it will be, however, in my [i.e., Christ's] hands."[70] What precisely to make of this remark is not self-evident. Perhaps this is a reference to Christian political control of Jerusalem, or to a mooting of the disputes between Jews and Muslims over the cross and over the responsibility for having crucified Jesus, or if he had been crucified at all (see Q 4:157–158).[71] Perhaps this is a statement of emancipation from restrictions on the public display of the cross under Islamic governance. Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān (648–705) introduced restrictions on the display of the cross as a Christian symbol.[72] In the *AAGJ*'s comment then, one

67 Walter E. Kaegi, *Heraclius. Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 78, 80, 151–152, 188–190, 200–203, and 280; Andrea Sommerlechner, "Kaiser Herakleios und die Rückkehr des heiligen Kreuzes nach Jerusalem. Überlegungen zu Stoff- und Motivgeschichte," *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 45 (2003): 319–360; Anatole Frolow, "La vraie croix et les expéditions d'Héraclius en Perse," *Revue des études byzantines* 1 (1953): 88–105; and Venance Grumel, "La reposition de la vraie croix à Jérusalem par Héraclius. Le jour et l'année," *Zeitschrift für Byzantinistik* 1 (1966): 139–149.

68 *AAGJ* 37.55.

69 *AAGJ* 37.55.

70 *AAGJ* 37.55.

71 For approaches to the question of the representation of Jesus' crucifixion in early Islam, particularly in the Qur'ān and the early traditions, see for instance Cornelia Horn, "Qur'ānic Perspectives on Jesus' Death and the Apocryphal *Acts of John*," in *Gelitten—Gestorben—Auferstanden. Passions- und Ostertraditionen im antiken Christentum*, ed. Tobias Nicklas, Andreas Merkt, and Joseph Verheyden, WUNT II/273 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010), 143–164; and Gabriel Reynolds, "The Muslim Jesus: Dead or Alive?," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72.2 (2009): 237–258.

72 See, for example, Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, 14; and Michael Philip

might see, among others, a strong reaction, albeit internal to the Christian community, against the justification for any such policies.

The standard blood-libel against Jews is present in connection with the crucifixion of Jesus. In some passages, references to the relics of the crucifixion serve the purpose of accusing the Jews of being responsible or at least co-responsible for Jesus' death. In a series of exclamations of "woe," the reference to "the one who will hand over my [i.e., Christ's] body to crucifixion" may aim solely at Judas.[73] However other passages refer to the Jews. Another exclamation of "woe" assigns prominent responsibility for Christ's crucifixion to the Jews, particularly to their judges. In that statement, the Jews are among those who "hav[e] seen me [i.e., Christ] hang from the cross between the two thieves." They "will watch and their judges will condemn me [i.e., Christ]."[74] When Christ will return in glory, the display of "the place of the thrust of the lance with which they [i.e., the Jews] pierced my [i.e., Christ's] side" will serve as a witness to support that Christ really died, but also as a piece of evidence that will convince "those who crucified my [i.e., Christ's] body … that [Christ is] the god of Abraham, the god of Isaac, the god of Jacob."[75] This same "place of the lance with which I [i.e., Christ] was pierced by the Jews in my body taken from Adam" is identified again elsewhere as a prominent place on the day of the resurrection.[76] The anti-Jewish sentiment in the background manifests itself in the reinterpretation of the narrative found in John's Gospel (John 19:34), where one of the Roman soldiers, who were present at Jesus' crucifixion, pierced Jesus' side with a spear to verify that Jesus was dead. In the *AAGJ*, Jesus shows the wounds of his crucifixion to Thomas, inviting the disciple to "see the place of the thrust where the Jews pierced me with a lance, when I hung on the cross."[77] The motif of the lance supports the apocalyptic and eschatological dimension of the text. A heavenly vision of the lance is one of the signs that "will indicate the end of the empire" of the Arabs. At that time, "in the sky there shall be visible the image of a lance, and … strong redness will appear in the sky to the west along with severe earthquakes and thunderstorms."[78]

Penn, *Envisioning Islam: Syriac Christians and the Early Muslim World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 28 and 31.

73 *AAGJ* 37.62; and Matthew 26:14–16.23–25.47–50; Mark 14:43–45; Luke 22:3–6.21–23.47–48; and John 6:71, 12:4, 13:2.21–30, and 18:2–5.

74 *AAGJ* 37.103.

75 *AAGJ* 37.59.

76 *AAGJ* 37.107.

77 *AAGJ* 53.11.

78 *AAGJ* 37.47.

The references to the lance and "the place of the thrust of the lance" integrate process-oriented and spatial notions, identifying both a site and an object within the confines of Jerusalem as the point of reference. Early Christian pilgrim accounts identify either the Church of Mount Zion or the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as places where the lance was on display, at least until these relics were carried off in 614. Thus far, only one witness, the pilgrim Arculf from 670, is known to have claimed to have seen the larger portion of the lance relic on display in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.[79] Depending on how one dates the origins and layers of redaction of the *AAGJ* and its apocalyptic section, its comments concerning the place of the lance either preserve another, indirect witness to the lance relic in Jerusalem after 670, or this passage is evidence of an earlier date of the apocalyptic material, to be associated with pre-Islamic, Jewish-Christian polemic. In either case, our apocalypse associates in a prominent way the lance relic with an apocalyptic revelation of truth to the Jews, literal and figurative, such that on the day of the resurrection they "will see with their eyes my [i.e., Christ's] omnipotence and will repent for having nailed my [Christ's] body to the cross."[80]

The cross-centered theology of our apocalypse culminates in two statements. The first one pronounces "woe" upon the one who "should … doubt me [i.e., Christ] after having seen me [i.e., Christ] hang from the cross between the two thieves."[81] According to the mindset reflected in the text, the witness of Christ's death on the cross demands faith from anyone who sees it. The second comment announces the cross as "the sign of my [i.e., Christ's] coming for justice."[82] "The place where my [i.e., Christ's] body was crucified by the Jews" was destined to be the site at which Christ intended to "lift up the seat of [his] glory"

79 Antonius of Piacenza (570), *Travels* 22, witnessed that he saw "the spear, by which the Lord was pierced in his side," in the Church of Mount Zion. See Paulus Geyer, *Itinera Hierosolymitana saeculi IIII–VIII* (Vindobonae, Pragae, and Lipsiae: F. Tempsky and G. Freytag, 1898), 174, ll. 11–13: *Ibi est in ipsa ecclesia et corona de spinis, qua coronatus est Dominus, et lancea, de qua in latere percussus est Dominus*. According to the *Breviarius de Hierosolyma* (ed. Geyer, *Itinera Hierosolymitana IIII–VIII*, 153, line 11): *Et est in medio civitatis basilica illa, ubi est lancea, unde percussus est Dominus, et de ipsa facta est crux ut lucet in nocte sicut sol in virtute diei*, the spear, or at least a fragment of it, was kept at the Church of the Anastasis, that is, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. For the fate of the relics of the lance in the early seventh century, see the *Chronicon Paschale*, trans. Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989), 157.

80 *AAGJ* 37.107.

81 *AAGJ* 37.103.

82 *AAGJ* 37.56.

upon his "coming" when he was "arriv[ing] in the clouds of heaven."[83] Here, the cross emerges as the prominent eschatological site of judgment and glorification for the body of Christ, namely the Church, whom the persecutors crucify.

3 Warning Christian Believers of the Threats to the Integrity of the Structure and Substance of Christian Family Life

The threat the enemy posed to the structures of the Christian household was a prominent theme throughout the apocalyptic material in the *AAGJ*. One relevant section offered a quotation of John 16:2, which was framed as Jesus' act of revealing to Simon that "a time will come when those who kill you will believe they are offering a sacrifice to God." This passage is applied allegorically to the contemporary situation, stating that "[w]hoever mentions my name with his mouth, he will be hated by all peoples."[84] The text then casts events in history presented in an apocalyptic foreshadowing, in particular the horrors the Christians were said to have experienced at the hands of the Islamic army. The nation that was said to have arisen from the desert was characterized in its actions as moving with acts of violence against the Christians, Jesus' "people," as blaspheming and rebelling with words and statements against God that were characterized as utmost novelty, and as spreading pollution and destruction through bloodshed and the desecration of holy sites.

The destruction of human resources and family structures was of particular interest to the author of the *AAGJ*. The text specified that the violent intruders "will make prisoners [of] the children of my people, (both) fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, and sell them among themselves and to all countries."[85] Not only were the young sold for monetary gain at home and abroad. The aged, who, one might imagine, were considered a mere liability, were killed violently. As much as the enemy forces were perceived as destroying the community and family, including the intergenerational and thus societal structures among the Christian population, so also were they said to have tried to build up their own community by helping one another. The furtherance of the new religion was identified as an important tool in this regard. Thus, the text formulated that "this people will set up wisdom and prophecy in order to empower them(selves) to help one another in the religion which has been introduced by them."

83 *AAGJ* 37.57.
84 *AAGJ* 30.2.
85 *AAGJ* 30.3.

The longest continuous apocalyptic segment that was incorporated into the *AAGJ* followed a reworked account of the story of Lazarus' resurrection. The setting was one in which "Christ our savior withdrew with his disciples onto the Mount of Olives."[86] Several themes are prominent in this material, including the need to preserve unity and accord within the Christian community. Jesus told his disciples, here addressed as "my brothers," that they were bound to his precept, that "one helps the other." He admonished that "there not be among you discord or hate," but rather "a common household."[87] Parallel to Jesus' invitation in the Gospel of John, so too in *AAGJ* the disciples were to "be with me [i.e., Jesus], as I am with the Father."[88] The community could expect to be strengthened to the extent that its members "love one another among you" with "sincere love," while at the same time "avoid[ing] bothersome stubbornness, hav[ing] compassion for the poor and for those oppressed by violence."[89]

Images of family appear repeatedly in illustrations of the ideas of unity and strength. Thus, Jesus is made to explain that he called the disciples "brothers" since they "are sons of the father."[90] Such language of sibling relationships has a strong emotional value, reflected for instance in cases when Jesus is made to say, "Know that you are my brothers, my beloved, my dear ones."[91] References to fraternal relationships, moreover, bespeak a higher level of dignity than that of discipleship. In this regard, one notes that while John 15:15 featured Jesus addressing his disciples as "friends" in a related context, the *AAGJ* employed the designation "brothers." Whereas the disciple may not raise up himself above his master, those who are called "brothers" receive from Christ "the dignity to judge the things of the present life and of the future." They will receive insight into "the secrets of the heavenly kingdom."[92] The text's emphasis on unity and group adherence carried over into the requirement that only those who were "baptized with water and spirit" were able to enter the eternal kingdom of heaven.[93] The *AAGJ* displays a realistic outlook with regard to human beings' ability to live up to the precepts they consider as being established by God. In dealing with cases of sinners, the notion of belonging to a community of like-minded ones is framed once more by taking recourse to family language. In a list of praises

86 *AAGJ* 37.1.
87 *AAGJ* 37.2.
88 *AAGJ* 37.3.
89 *AAGJ* 37.4.
90 *AAGJ* 37.7.
91 *AAGJ* 37.5.
92 *AAGJ* 37.9.
93 *AAGJ* 37.11.

of blessedness, the first ones to be praised are those "who will have done penitence for [their] sins through [Jesus'] name. They will receive being count[ed] … with [Jesus'] friends" and will be "add[ed] … to the family of [Jesus'] grace."[94]

The interest in the structure of the Christian community and its persistent adherence to the Christian faith is expressed in the *AAGJ* in matters related to the preservation of family structures and the concern against intermarriage outside the group, resulting in attrition. Thus, the *AAGJ* warned husbands, fathers, and heads of families that they should "[f]orbid your wives to associate with their wives, and forbid your sons to frequent their sons, so that it does not happen that they will be poisoned by them and reject me."[95]

Inter-familial strife and domestic violence might also be seen as metaphors for the self-destruction of the Muslim Arab ruling dynasty. Jesus, promising that "the reign of this people will end,"[96] states that "among them they will be tormented to the point that a father will kill his own son, without having compassion on him, and a son will kill his own father without feeling for him any pity, a brother will kill [his] brother, a mother [her] daughter, and a daughter [her] mother, a daughter-in-law her mother-in-law and a mother-in-law her daughter-in-law."[97] Though drawn from Micah 7:6, Matthew 10:35, and Luke 12:53, the *AAGJ* draws attention to the violence of succession in the caliphate. It may project from the events of the Third Fitna (744–750/752), a Khārijite rebellion (746) and ʿAbbāsid Revolution (ending 750). Turbulence and civil war were part of the Umayyad Dynasty. The stability of the ʿAbbāsids was also punctuated with upheaval. Apocalyptic literature and its eschatology intended to exploit the observation of such cycles, portraying a world controlled by inimical forces, until a decisive break with this history would occur through divine intervention in favor of the persecuted minority of true believers.

The language of internecine conflict in apocalyptic discourse presents an allegorical interpretation of biblical material in light of the conflicts arising in historical transfers of power. Our apocalypse admonishes its audience to reject family interests which fuel the power struggles of the enemy. Blessed are those "who will neglect fathers and mothers for [Jesus'] sake" and blessed is "the one who goes far from brothers, sons, and relatives."[98] Those addressed are parents, and this admonition is a call to priestly vocation. Blessed is the parent "who will give me his son [as a] priest, for I will judge this act like the offering of a

94 *AAGJ* 37.18.
95 *AAGJ* 37.36.
96 *AAGJ* 37.47.
97 *AAGJ* 37.48.
98 *AAGJ* 37.69.

sacrifice and on him I will pour out my grace. I will accept for him the prayer of his son and I will pardon his sins."[99] The needs of the service of God are equipped with greater ecclesiological relevance and implications. Those who set free their offspring from serving the immediate interests of their families and instead allow them to serve the church as ordained ministers are promised salvation as a reward for their sacrifices.

The family of believers, part of the oldest stratum of Christian identity (e.g., Romans 1:13, 7:1, 8:12, 10:1; 1 Corinthians 1:10–11; Galatians 1:11), is given outward expression through the ransoming of captives from prison or slavery. Blessed are they "who will visit their brothers and take them away from the severe violence of the tyrant" and those "who will rescue their brothers, oppressed under the slavery of the unbelievers." They are promised not to "see the fire on the day of judgment."[100] Our apocalypse admonishes Christians not to "hand over their brothers to the kings and to the judges of the world"[101] and addresses warnings against those "who satisfy themselves while their brothers suffer hunger,"[102] those "who refrain from helping their own brothers in the time of persecution,"[103] and those "who lead a life of comfort, while their brothers suffer in misery and hunger."[104] In times of persecution, such language had a strong appeal since it addressed the church community's needs by calling believers to be faithful to their most immediate cultural and social unit of reference. Recourse to family- and sibling-related language then enabled the author of the *AAGJ* to pull the strongest rhetorical registers that were available if one wished to encourage support for community interests, and more narrowly, the interests of the *ekklesia*.

However, the creation of an "inside" group necessarily results in those who are "outside." Our apocalypse admonished Christian men not to "consider marrying an unbaptized woman." "She will be the ground on which Satan walks to Hades."[105] This apocalypse condemns women "who stain their bodies with a foreign nation."[106] "Woe again and again to the women who [permitted] their bodies to be stained by the infidels" and "woe to all women who have become like a cot for those who have not been baptized."[107] A deeper investigation of

99 *AAGJ* 37.77.
100 *AAGJ* 37.84.
101 *AAGJ* 37.95.
102 *AAGJ* 37.97.
103 *AAGJ* 37.97.
104 *AAGJ* 37.102.
105 *AAGJ* 37.93.
106 *AAGJ* 37.97.
107 *AAGJ* 37.97.

this material would have to examine the available historical data for practices of mixed relationships across boundary lines between Christians and Muslims. The text may have in view the rhetoric of the prohibition of polytheism in the Hebrew Bible, expressed there as an act of female Israel's fornication against Yahweh as her true *baʿal*, that is, her husband and master.[108] We are presented with inter-religious marriage as a stumbling block for the members of the family of believers, warning against "those whose own works incite their own sons and brothers to reject [Christ]."[109] Clearly, Christians were in a legally inferior position, as Islamic law does not permit apostasy, and the culture of Islamic society required conversion for non-Muslim men, who marry into the *umma*. It may well be that avoiding mixed marriage was to prevent not only conversion from Christianity, but the harsh penalties which might have attended those who converted from Islam into Christianity.

The apocalypse embedded in the *AAGJ* warned its audience of disastrous consequences for the Christian Church arising from closer engagements with Muslims. An important rhetorical tool in this process was the depiction of the entanglements of a range of scenarios of family units that were composed of members of mixed religious backgrounds. A critical responsibility for avoiding such potential disasters was laid at the feet of the women in the families.[110]

As in the rhetorical construction of the scenes that addressed the idea of the *Endkaiser*, so too Jews as well as Muslims were cast as a threat to the family of believers. "Woe to those who associate with the Hebrews on the days of their festivals and rejoice with them," an attitude in Christianity that is at least as old as the canonical gospel traditions, in which Jesus and his disciples celebrate the Passover in an upper room symbolically separate from the rest of

108 For such reflections, an examination of Ezra and Nehemia may be helpful, even though the matter there is not strictly parallel, insofar as the Israelite priesthood is set on expelling foreign wives from among the Israelites. For relevant, initial perspectives see for example Yoon Kyung Lee, "Postexilic Jewish Experience and Korean Multiculturalism," in *Migration and Diaspora: Exegetical Voices of Women in Northeast Asian Countries*, ed. Hisako Kinukawa (Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 3–18, here 10–15; and Karen Strand Winslow, "Ethnicity, Exogamy, and Zipporah," *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 4.1 (2006): http://wjudaism.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/wjudaism/article/view/225/311.

109 *AAGJ* 37.99.

110 Other apocalyptic texts and traditions also allow one to observe an ambiguous approach to women. See for instance the discussion in Alexandra Cuffel, "Jewish Tribes and Women in the Genesis and Battle of the Dajjal: Nuʿayim ibn Ḥammād al-Khuzāʿī al-Marwzī's *Kitāb al-Fitan*," in *Peoples of the Apocalypse: Eschatological Beliefs and Political Scenarios*, ed. Wolfram Brandes, Felicitas Schmieder, and Rebekka Voß (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 129–146.

feasting Jerusalem. "Woe to those who give their children to be nursed by the infidels" as well as woe to "those who marry Jews or give [their] own in marriage [to them]."[111] These themes are perennial in Christian literature down to the modern period. Clearly, some Christians did not see any reason not to employ Jewish women as wet nurses, or to fall in love with and marry Jewish spouses. Our apocalypse considered close associations with Jews in the contexts of family life and children's upbringings. The notion of Jews as a threat which could destroy Christianity from within sustained the traditional trope deriving from biblical and early Church material and expressed the deep anti-Jewish animosity at the core of official Christian institutions until more recent history.

4 Using Demonizing Language

The animosity against Jews in the text has a somewhat raw expression in the demonizing language appearing in this apocalypse and elsewhere in the *AAGJ*. Specifically, this language occurs in vignettes of storytelling that had the author or later redactor of the *AAGJ* adjust the narratives of the canonical gospels in such a way that the newly formulated text suggested to its contemporary audience that Islamic constructions of Jesus were wrong and misguided. The author of the *AAGJ* incorporated apocalyptic material for instance into the presentation of the miracle that had Jesus call back Lazarus from the dead. In this narrative, Satan reported to his minions that as Lazarus was being raised from the dead, Satan had witnessed how his power and authority as well as that of Death and Hades had been broken through "the voice of the carpenter," "this man, born from the Virgin Mary." The demons reassured their master that the raising of Lazarus would be forgotten, as were the oracles and signs of the prophets Ezekiel, Elijah, Moses, and Elisha. In this way, "[t]he son of Mary isn't more excellent than the prophet Ezekiel."[112] In this instance the author or redactor of the *AAGJ* managed to place into the mouth of the demons the same message about Jesus' nature that Islam promoted. Like Muhammad and prophets of earlier times, for the Qur'ān Jesus was merely a messenger (Q 3:143, 5:75). A Christian reader would be able to understand that the demons, like Islam, thought of Jesus as a mere prophet. For its audience then, and by way of a rather obvious implication, the *AAGJ* identified Muslims as servants and colleagues of Satan.

111 *AAGJ* 37.102.

112 *AAGJ* 36.9.

Indeed, the demonization of Islam is completed with its equivocation with Satan, through the typical etiology of Islam's dominance over a once "Christian" world: Islam is a punishment for Christians having fallen away from the obligations of their faith and instead having taken to worship wealth. In turning away from their faith, Jesus' former followers, according to the *AAGJ*, had given rise to "injury, condemnation, and lies."[113] In particular, the criticism focused on the concern that Christians had become adherents of "the veneration of gold and silver, the veneration from which the son of Mary had led them [away], because the veneration of these two metals, in God's view, is like the sin of those who worship idols." As a result of Satan's efforts, Christian believers now were said to be falling subject to "envy, [the] desire for honor, and lawsuits." Moreover, as another outcome of Satan's maneuvers and through their own pursuit of the vices of envy, pride, and contentiousness, the Christians had changed into being the object of the hatred of all those nations, who "desire to persecute whoever invokes his [i.e., Christ's] name and adheres to his religion." With these statements, the text lent its weight to a self-censorship of the Church. It also provided its readers with a ready explanation for why Muslims dominated Christians.[114] The text had Satan express his intention to lead the nations to the conviction that it was acceptable to God if they "spill the blood of whoever worships [Jesus]" and thus to bring "a multitude of the members of [Jesus'] people" to "abandon [Jesus] and follow [Satan]." The figure of Satan in the text, as is suggested only a few pages later, served double-duty as a representation of Muhammad's intentions. Having formerly followed Jesus, now those Christians who had fallen away had become followers of Satan, or in less spiritual and historically more specific terms, had become Muhammad's followers. The eschatological dimension of this presumed connection was articulated in terms of a redirection of ritual which in the language of the text was going to occur "during the last days of the world."[115] When the time had come, those who had turned their backs on Jesus and turned towards Satan instead would "join together in [Satan's] name and erect to [Satan] edifices in which [Satan] will be venerated." As is necessary for the apocalyptic genre, the deity controls this state of affairs, which will last "for such a time," to be replaced by an eschatological judgment against those who had abandoned the community.[116]

113 *AAGJ* 36.10.

114 I am grateful to Robert Phenix for inspiring discussions of this material.

115 *AAGJ* 36.10.

116 At this instance, the author or redactor of the *AAGJ* may have joined together at least two originally separate texts or traditions in this section. Following an exposition of the conversation between Satan and the demons and Satan's longer speech at the end, the *AAGJ*

In its longest apocalyptic section, the *AAGJ* called upon the believers to fight a spiritual battle and instructed them to "unsheathe your swords against Satan."[117] The enemy's tactics were manifold. Though the adversary "will come like a thief,"[118] "even if [he is] exalted to heaven, he will fall down to Hades,"[119] recalling the biblical imagery of the fallen angels. Although the enemy will manifest itself in the presence of "vipers, serpents, and scorpions," the believer is "grant[ed] … a great strength to crush [them]," "so that when you are bitten with venom, not a single harm will come to you,"[120] an echo of the Longer Ending of Mark.

The demonization of Islam continues with an identification of Islamic worship as satanic idolatry. Our apocalypse warns its audience of a people who "will worship the idols publicly, with sacrifices to Satan, and will boast of it even."[121] The Muslim tradition, in the polemical perception of the author of the *AAGJ*, was a continuation of pre-Christian idol worship, being performed under the direct influence of Satan. While this text hearkens back to the rich Christian tradition of demonizing Greco-Roman religious practices and alleged Jewish idolatry,[122] a subtle shift here is the supplanting of the worship of demons in the forms of the various Greco-Roman deities to a single leader of evil, in recognition of Islamic claims to monotheistic worship.

Our text depicts Muhammad, though never mentioned by name, implicitly as an incarnation of Satan. Although it is often incoherent in its arrangement, our apocalypse characterizes Mecca and the public worship at the Kaʿba to be part of an abomination by a people who "will praise whatever is abominable, and will hold in abomination whatever is laudable—[they] will consider the

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explicitly states that it is returning to the story of Lazarus. The splitting up of the story of Lazarus into two portions then suggests that the apocalyptic material that is found in between is a later embedding.

117 *AAGJ* 37.4.

118 *AAGJ* 37.25.

119 *AAGJ* 37.25. See Gen 6:1–4, Jude 1:6, 2 Peter 2:4, Rev 12:7–9 and 20:1–3, as well as stories within the Enoch literature. For secondary discussions, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: the Reception of Enochic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Angela Kim Harkins, Kelley Coblentz Bautch, and John Endres, eds., *The Fallen Angels Traditions: Second Temple Developments and Reception History* (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association, 2014).

120 *AAGJ* 37.8.

121 *AAGJ* 37.14.

122 The literature on early Christian polemic against Greco-Roman gods is voluminous. For a recent, helpful contribution, see Maijastina Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360–430* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 136–184.

good [to be] bad, and the bad, good."[123] The responsibility for such a misguided focus, in the judgment of the author or redactor of the *AAGJ*, rests with the one whom that nation accepted as their leader and the liturgical practices he established for them. Within the logic of the author of the *AAGJ*, Mecca and the Kaʿba were established to rival Jerusalem. Thus, within the polemical framework of the apocalyptic thought of the *AAGJ*, it was not God who resided at the site which the Muslims had chosen as the center of their cult, but rather "the prince Iblis" who occupied its throne. Giving the author's contemporary setting an eschatological meaning served to console those who were under persecution that they would be released soon from their turmoil: "wherever he [i.e., Satan] establishes his seat, [Christ] ha[s] cast down the inhuman beast" and also in this instance, "[Christ] will cast him down from his rank of dignity." Thus, in the end "Baʿalzebul …, the great[est] among the devils," "because he went away from [God]," will not be able to keep up his reign.[124]

5 The Valorization of Martyrdom and of the Cult of the Martyrs

Naturally, for a community portrayed as living under constant persecution, martyrdom and martyrs have important roles in the apocalyptic and eschatological framework of the *AAGJ*. "Fortunate … is the one who will die on account of my name," since "from him indeed the demons will flee."[125] Consistent with the prominent role of the apostle Peter in the *AAGJ*, Peter's martyrdom was of special significance. His crucifixion as imitation of the death of Jesus was mentioned above. The text passage in question did not include the modification of Peter's crucifixion as being upside down that one finds elsewhere in apocryphal traditions.[126] Whereas Peter's crucifixion represents his singular authority for the Syriac church, the apostle John's fate of being thrown "to the wild beasts in a city of idols" without "tast[ing] death until [Jesus'] second coming" exemplified both persecution and the fulfillment of the promise that those who were faithful—John is called the "faithful friend"—"will live, not die, but will dwell in my [i.e., Jesus'] paradise of delights."[127]

In imitation of Matthew 5:1–12 and Luke 6:20–25, our apocalypse contains a list of beatitudes, which now also include explicit praises of the martyrs. As

123 *AAGJ* 37.26.
124 *AAGJ* 37.30.
125 *AAGJ* 37.19.
126 *AAGJ* 37.12. See above, n. 59.
127 *AAGJ* 37.12.

the final and highest category of those whom the *AAGJ* praised as blessed, one encounters the ones "who will die on account of [Jesus'] name."[128] Martyrs are invested with great powers, consistent with their general reception in Christian cultic veneration and hagiography. They were promised the power to put demons to flight, receive the honor of having shrines and churches erected "over [their] bones," and even though they would die physically, they were promised "neither to dissolve nor to die."[129] The martyrs were shown forth as being empowered to prophesy. Once they were dead, their bodies were thought to be the sources of blessings and miracles of a magnitude that even surpassed Jesus' miracles.[130] In another list of declarations of blessedness written in the style of a poetic hymn, *AAGJ* extolled the martyrs as "pure sacrifices," as Jesus' "highest priests" and "friends," as "bodily angels."[131] The martyrs' equality to angels also emerged from the respect the nations were said to have offered them.[132] Martyrs were reliable intercessors in petitionary prayer. Jesus is presented as regarding martyrs' bones as a source of salvation,[133] declaring that "fountains of salvation" would spring up from the bones of saints, that is, those "who die[d] in [Jesus'] obedience."[134] The martyrs' bones were seen as not

128 *AAGJ* 37.19.

129 *AAGJ* 37.19.

130 *AAGJ* 37.20.

131 *AAGJ* 37.73. A comment that sees martyrs as being on a par with angels calls upon two sets of early Christian ideas. One notion that developed in Christian discourse was that martyrs were considered to have gained immediate access to paradise upon death. One prominent text that can be referenced for this idea is the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 19. Thus, martyrs were equal to the angels at least also insofar as they, upon their death, dwelled with the angels in heaven. A second set of ideas lurking in the background is the continuation from the martyr to the ascetic in the ancient Christian world. Ascetics were readily thought of as bodily angels, as those who were able to live already the life of the angels while still dwelling on earth and in this life. Dimensions of the angelic existence on earth then that applied to ascetics could also be associated with the ascetics' predecessors, that is, the martyrs. See Karl Suso Frank, *ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΣ ΒΙΟΣ: Begriffsanalytische und begriffsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum "engelgleichen Leben" im frühen Mönchtum* (Münster in Westphalia: Aschendorff, 1964); and Edward Eugene Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr: the Monk as the Successor of the Martyr* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1950).

132 *AAGJ* 37.73.

133 *AAGJ* 37.73.

134 *AAGJ* 37.18. One notes that the *AAGJ* did not dwell on the theme that Muslim domination may be a source of Christians experiencing divine punishment. For the presence of this motif more widely in Syriac apocalyptic texts, see the discussion in Cynthia Villagomez, "Christian Salvation through Muslim Domination: Divine Punishment and Syriac Apocalyptic Expectation in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Medieval Encounters* 4.3 (1998): 203–218.

being subject to decay.[135] In addition, reflecting the ancient practice of visiting the tombs of saints in search for healing, the author or redactor of this apocalypse gives full authority to the power of *martyria*, having Jesus state, "Whatever issues forth from [their] bones will be a medicine for the healing of every infirmity."[136] Honoring the martyrs is the means of access to the heavenly kingdom.[137] The *AAGJ* considered the martyrs, that is, those Christians who died as a consequence of their encounters with Islam, to possess a highly elevated status in the community. Building on this, the apocalyptic material in the *AAGJ* developed the theme of dying for one's faith when resisting the advances of the new religion of Islam as an influential feature of the structure of the Christian church. Martyrdom and the cult of the martyrs then were formative factors of the ecclesiological framework that was operative within this text and its polemic.

6 Biblical Interpretation and Rewriting Strategies

The *Arabic Apocryphal Gospel of John* asserts Christian ecclesial identity over and against Islam and anachronistically over Judaism by deploying several themes which carry Christian polemical thought and constructs of identity across time and space. One may also discern characteristic features in the structure of our apocalypse. Most prominent among these is the approach to reworking canonical gospel material, particularly from Matthew and Luke.

First, one notes significant textual parallels to Matthew. In the first apocalyptic discourse, for instance, the *AAGJ* echoes the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5), in particular, that the disciples were identified as "lamps of the world," "lights for its wilderness," and "salt for [the world's or the wilderness'] nourishment."[138] Whether such observations suffice to support a claim of a unique and characteristic role of the Syriac Gospel of Matthew in the history of early Christian-Muslim relations is a different matter.[139] The first of the *AAGJ*'s

135 *AAGJ* 37.18.

136 *AAGJ* 37.18. For the usage of oil as the medium through which the power of the martyr's bones is transmitted through the pilgrim visiting the martyr's tomb, see for example Maria-Teresa Canivet, "Le reliquaire à huile de la grande église de Ḥūarte (Syrie)," *Syria* 55 (1978): 153–162; and Wilhelm Gessel, "Das Öl der Märtyrer. Zur Funktion und Interpretation der Ölsarkophage von Apamea in Syrien," *Oriens Christianus* 72 (1988): 183–202.

137 *AAGJ* 37.75.

138 *AAGJ* 30.1; cf. Matt 5:13–14.

139 See for instance Emran Iqbal El-Badawi, *The Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

apocalyptic discourses is one which Jesus is said to have offered to his twelve disciples as they were gathering in Jericho, and not on a mountain top.[140] This setting is perhaps rather reminiscent of Luke's Sermon on the Plain. One notes that important components of the apocalyptic ecclesiology of *AAGJ* are similar to the "Beatitudes and Woes" in the Christian literary tradition, an element that has its beginnings not with Matthew 5 but with its cognate in Luke 6. This feature of offering lists of predications of "blessedness" or "being fortunate" on the one hand, and of further lists of statements of "woe to those who" do such or such an evil deed, on the other hand, is noteworthy. Other apocalyptic texts, particularly those in the Syriac Christian tradition, at best offer short lists of two or three such elements at a time. In the *AAGJ*, however, the lists consist of between two to three and over eighty individual elements in a row.[141] Here a reader may not only think of the parallels in the canonical gospels. One can find comparative material in other apocryphal gospels where lists that repeatedly start with the same expression, for instance an acclamation of the name of a biblical figure or a meaningful phrase, suggest either that this material derived from liturgical prayers or that it was intended to serve in liturgical settings.[142] The lists of blessedness and woes in the *AAGJ*'s apocalypse then may have their origins in traditions derived from Christian worship settings primarily, and only secondarily from New Testament predecessors. They witness to the ecclesiological and ecclesial "Sitz im Leben" of the ideas and their literary shape which *AAGJ* and its apocalypse present.

7 The Figure of Simon Peter

Our apocalypse presents Simon Peter as the leader of Jesus' disciples. The significance of his crucifixion has been mentioned above. This section examines the context of his prominence in the *AAGJ*. The Hebrew Bible had served early Christians as an abundant source of imagery for typological exegesis. In the face of a growing awareness of the Qurʾān as a new and rival Scripture, Christians in the East who sought to strengthen their individual and ecclesial identity continued to take recourse to Old Testament imagery, while also seeking New

140 *AAGJ* 30.

141 See for instance several examples in *AAGJ* 37.

142 See for instance the *Georgian Monophysite Gospel* 1 and 4. The Polish translation offered by Gregor Peradze, "Nieznana Ewangelia Apokryficzna, pochodząca z kół monofizyckich," *Elpis* 13 (1935): 3–36, here 5 and 7, omits the relevant material from the manuscript text. An edition and study of the Georgian text is in progress.

Testament figures as models. The prominence which the *AAGJ* gives to Peter reveals an attempt to work towards unifying the Christian flock behind a single, prominent leader.

In support of portraying Peter as the unifier of the community, our apocalypse early on already imparts the main instructions concerning imminent apocalyptic events to "Simon son of Judah," that is, the figure of Simon in the context of a scene that parallels Matthew 16:13–20. The contents of Jesus' predictions concerning future events appear in a list of beatitudes, a literary ornamentation similar to that used to extol the martyrs. Here our text reveals how the author used canonical biblical discourse to further ecclesiological content. In Matthew 16:17–19, Jesus responded to Simon's statement that Jesus was "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," by identifying the Father in heaven as Simon's source of knowledge. The same message was conveyed in *AAGJ*. Yet instead of featuring Simon as the rock upon which the church was going to be built and which Hades would not overcome, and instead of commenting on the reception of "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" that gave Simon the authority to bind and loose on earth with effectiveness also for heaven, in the *AAGJ*, Jesus answered Simon, "if you are one who knocks at the door, to you it will be opened."[143] This reply provided an apocalyptic interpretation to Matthew 16:13–20 and the prominence of Peter. As a Christian apocryphal text, the *AAGJ* was composed with an audience of Christian readers and hearers in mind. These Christians were familiar with Matthew 16:13–20 and would have readily recalled Jesus' promises to Simon.

The ecclesiological implications of the dialogue between Jesus and Simon in the Gospel of Matthew then were also present in *AAGJ*, given that with the question "Simon, son of Jonah, who do you say I am?" as a marker in *AAGJ*, the text called upon Matthew 16:15, but also upon the whole of Matthew 16:13–20 as an intertext. The added interpretation of *AAGJ* was that it supplemented the instruction of Matthew 16:13–20, which was internal to the body of the church and pointed to Simon Peter as the internal leader of the church, with an interpretation of a more universal, and thus characteristically apocalyptic function Simon exercised. The AAGJ functioned in a world that experienced a steady growth of the influence of the presence of Muslims. In that context, Christian affairs no longer depended on what was regulated within the Church. The leader of the Church, that is, Simon Peter, or rather within history, Simon's successor, that is, the Patriarch of Antioch, had to be and could be one who had to and could knock on doors, including those of the new rulers, in order

143 *AAGJ* 30.2.

to achieve what needed to be carried out. The promise Jesus offered was that those doors would be opened from inside. With a view to a continued centralization of power structures within the church, the *AAGJ* promoted a strategic ecclesiology that was effective over and against adverse, external forces.

A second apocalyptic discourse section focusing on Simon Peter has Jesus talking with John and James, the sons of Zebedee, on the Mount of Olives. There is a supercessionist, anti-Jewish polemic in this discourse: after expelling the Jews, the nations would come "from the East and the West of the earth" and feast joyously "at the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Despite the fact that Jews of all nationalities were already visiting Jerusalem for centuries, with little hesitation one identifies the post-Constantinian Jerusalem of churches and monasteries with pilgrims and monks from every nation. However, as it is with tourism, these new arrivals would not mean endless good news for the disciples. Jesus warned John and James of false accusations before judges, hatred, murder, and families being destroyed with "a brother [who] will deliver his brother to death, and a son his parents."[144] The framework of this revelatory discourse featured a group that was limited to Jesus, John, and James. Yet a list of blessings of the disciples preceded a second list of blessings for Simon Peter only.[145] Thus, our apocalypse may have incorporated a separate source of traditions on Simon without sufficient regard for literary coherence. In sixteen beatitudes pronounced for Simon, Jesus emphasized the authority Simon was to have at Jesus' second coming and the lasting and honorable commemoration he was to receive. Simon was exalted as "the foundation of the priesthood," in the lineage of Aaron and Melchizedek. He would exercise full power of forgiveness at the Last Judgment, while at the same time receiving plentiful pardon for his own denial of Christ, and is considered to be "like to the prophet Elijah." The solid friendship and amicable relationship between Jesus and Simon Peter were captured in expressions of mutual benefit deriving for both from knowing one another. Simon was praised as blessed for the "contemplation of the light of the world," an honor which he was to share. The blessing which Simon enjoyed by virtue of being in charge of the faithful only increased as his flock came to "recognize [his] fortune," perhaps an acknowledgement of the historical development of Petrine primacy.[146] Simon's leadership of the faithful had been determined already "before [Jesus was] creating the ages and the cen-

144 *AAGJ* 32.3; see also Luke 12:53.

145 *AAGJ* 37.

146 If one considers the comment as a pointer towards an aspect in the text justifying Roman Catholic missionary work among non-Catholic Christians, this would serve as an indicator that the final redaction of the text likely fell during the crusader period.

turies." Jesus' words were formulated to present Simon as one whose election was from of old in God's council and who had been raised precisely for this task of leading the church.

Prominent also in these blessings are themes of forgiveness and the remission of sins. Not only was Simon a man who himself received ample forgiveness, ten times the amount needed to overcome the burden of his own sin of denying Christ. He was now "entrusted" with "the keys of the gate of pardon." The audience receives assurance that Jesus "chose [him] so that [he] would remit [their] sins." The focus on Simon as the foundation of the church was supplemented by the observation that people drew near to Simon when they "obey" him and "feel attracted to [his] words." He was held up as an example both because he had no fear for the life of his body and because he was "a herald of truth … call[ing] to all the regions of the earth so that they believe in [Christ]." In order to orient the community towards what was essential, the blessings of Simon concluded by highlighting him as "the head of the believers and the guide of just men."[147]

Where there is exaltation of one over many, envy is present. Thus, the *AAGJ* presents the disciples' envy at Simon's dominant position.[148] Some scenes were modeled on a reworking of Matthew 20:26 (par. Mark 10:43–44 and Mark 9:35), Matthew 12:30 (par. Luke 11:23), and Matthew 19:28 (par. Luke 22:30). It might be possible to read this as an apologetic for Roman primacy over Christianity, draped in Jesus' attempts to refocus the disciples' interests by telling them that greatness comes through service. Whether this is already a reference to the idea behind the Roman Pope's title of *servorum servus*, along with a call to unity and the reward of sitting in judgment over humankind at the universal resurrection, is another question.[149] As in the New Testament, our apocalypse states that judgment over the Jews was the right of the disciples,[150] whereas the faithful would be judged by Jesus alone; in light of the anti-Jewish polemic of this work, this division of labor would be an interesting statement concerning the corruption of human justice. However, our apocalypse states that it is because the faithful have consumed the body and blood of Jesus that no human has authority over their eternal fate.[151] On the Day of Judgment the faithful "will take life as an inheritance, and it will be without end." The *AAGJ* had Jesus state that any forgiveness and any punishment was to be through his physical and

147 *AAGJ* 32.6.
148 *AAGJ* 32.7.
149 *AAGJ* 32.8.
150 See Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30.
151 *AAGJ* 32.9.

Eucharistic body. If there were rivalries among Jesus' followers, some mediation could take place through Jesus' direct action. Yet in the majority of cases, any interferences into the regular life of the church had to be mediated through the church that administered Jesus' Eucharistic body to the faithful.

Elsewhere in the text, one can discern elements of tension between the voices of Scripture and tradition, or perhaps also between Paul and Peter. The vision of the end which Jesus projected in the *AAGJ* was more inclusive and perhaps somewhat more lenient than what the canonical New Testament had to offer. In Matthew 25:31–46, for instance, the Son of Man drew up a clear line of demarcation between the sheep and the goats: the sheep went to heaven, the goats to hell. The Pauline corpus was particularly keen on excluding sinners from the kingdom. First Corinthians bluntly stated that "the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9). To the Galatians, moreover, Paul wrote that those who did "the works of the flesh," by which he meant "fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, drunkenness, carousing, and the like," "will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21).[152] In the *AAGJ*, on the other hand, Jesus told his disciples that those "who will have committed sins," still have a chance to gain mercy, given that they "will inherit supplication," that is, they will benefit from the right to intercede and to be the beneficiaries of intercessory prayers.[153] Such a comment revealed an adjusted eschatology that could arise from a reality of life in the Christian community over time. The initial years of first-century fervor and striving for perfection by this point had given way to a stronger sense that the avoidance of sins in the lives of individual Christians was easier to demand than to achieve. Yet while the choice of the expression "inherit supplication" may reflect the reality of the intercession and supplication of believers and saints for those who needed it, it could also serve as an indicator that Christians found themselves situated within a milieu in which they had become accustomed to having to petition and supplicate those in power for any move they made. To some extent, this was the situation in which large segments of the population found themselves in the Greco-Roman world. Yet also in the early Islamic world, Christians were members of a community that increasingly was in a position of subjection. They carried the status of a minority. Thus, they understood well what it meant to supplicate those in power over their lives when they needed or required adjustments to the details of their status.

152 See also Ephesians 5:5, a comment in a letter that some ascribe to Paul and others do not.
153 *AAGJ* 32.9.

The *AAGJ* expanded one of the declarations of Simon Peter's blessedness, which was grounded in being able to see and hear what patriarchs and prophets desired to, but could not see and hear. In the relevant passage, Abraham is presented as "Abraham, the friend of God (*ibrāhīm al-khalīl*), your ancestor."[154] Readers could hear resonances of the New Testament and the Qur'ān in this formulation. In fact, the Letter of James (2:23) appears to be the first text in the Christian tradition that called Abraham "friend of God (φίλος θεοῦ)." Yet also passages in the Qur'ān, for instance al-Nisā' 4:125, could be seen as a parallel. According to Q 4:125, "who can be better in religion than one who submits his whole self to Allah, does good, and follows the way of Abraham the one true in faith? For Allah did take Abraham for a friend (*wa-ittakhadha allāh ibrāhīm khalīlan*)." As the Christian author was adopting vocabulary that Muslims could associate with the Qur'ān, he was at the same time supporting his own claim to Jesus' divinity in language that was reminiscent of the Qur'ān. Abraham became a witness to Jesus' divinity as a result of the reader of the Qur'ān remembering that the text said, "For Allah took Abraham for a friend" and the *AAGJ* formulated as words of Jesus the revelation given to Simon by Jesus that "Abraham, the friend of God, your ancestor, desired for a long time to see me [i.e., Jesus], then finally his desire to see me [i.e., Jesus] was heard and he rejoiced in it."[155] As the Christ-figure encouraged persistence and coherence across all layers of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and among the laity, apocalyptic elements were employed as a tool for community building and preservation.

8 The Relevance of the Priesthood

In its efforts to unite the Christian faithful, our apocalypse encouraged its audience to promote and support the priesthood, primarily the ministerial priesthood, but also the general priesthood of the believers. Furthering the priesthood already started in the family. Thus, the *AAGJ* suggested to parents to devote their children to the priestly service. This was a sacrifice in the family economy, which required support through manual labor for the family to survive and which required children to support their parents past their working years. The text encouraged parents to place their sons into the care of the church for their formation as clerics. Blessed is the father who "will give [to Christ] his son [as a] priest;"[156] his deed would be "judge[d] … like the offering

154 *AAGJ* 30.2.
155 *AAGJ* 30.2.
156 *AAGJ* 37.77.

of a sacrifice," and God would "pour out [his] grace" upon the priest's father.[157] One could see certain parallels here with traditions of the ritual murder of children. We have the frequent trope of a reward of "enhanced intercession" for the sacrificing parent, the deity "accept[ing] for him the prayer of his son" and "pardon[ing] his sins." Mothers are not mentioned as deriving any benefit from this priesthood, unless one understands the Arabic "father" to mean "parent," which seems unlikely.

The age-worn rhetoric of reward for those who frequent churches out of piety is offered as a consolation for those who have no children in the church hierarchy. Praying conducted inside "holy buildings" was counted a thousandfold more precious with God than "prayers made in their houses."[158] Spending time in a church generally means spending money there, too. It is difficult to discern, whether our apocalypse reflects the marketing point of Latin Christian indulgences for those contemplating in *loci sancti*, or if this is part of an earlier shared model of connecting spirituality with economic interests.

The faithful who turned to the priests could expect reward not only in this world, but also in the world to come. Eternal rest "in the happy abode of Paradise and in the endless kingdom" was promised to those "who will seek out priests and help them for the better out of love for [Christ]."[159] The same rewards were for the priests, as long as they "will serve at my altars with fear and trembling, sanctity, and justice." Their recompense would be in appropriate measure with regard to their merits.[160] Any service done properly in God's house would receive its reward. Our text singled out, for instance, "those who illuminate [God's] houses with bright lights."[161] The first place among the priestly servants of God was ascribed to the martyrs, consistent with the importance of victims of persecution. The *AAGJ* declared as "fortunate … those who will be killed on my account." The text spoke of them not only as "pure sacrifices" and Christ's "bodily angels," but especially as Christ's "highest priests" and "friends."[162]

The text strongly encouraged the Christian believers to "benefit [Christ's] priests," "venerate them, and support them." As a reward, Christ would overlook Christians' sins.[163] Of special significance was a practice of honoring priests on

157 *AAGJ* 37.77.

158 *AAGJ* 37.77: "a single prayer in my church I count for the one who offers it as equal to a thousand prayers at home."

159 *AAGJ* 37.68.

160 *AAGJ* 37.68.

161 *AAGJ* 37.68.

162 *AAGJ* 37.73.

163 *AAGJ* 37.77.

Sundays. Thus, the text declared as "blessed" the one "who brings a priest into his house on the day of my [i.e., Christ's] Resurrection," given that the first day of the week was the greatest of all days God created.[164] Perhaps the authors of the *AAGJ* already had in mind here a practice of offering hospitality to priests as guests in private homes on Easter, or close to Easter. The text might refer to a practice, which is continued in modern days in some Eastern Christian communities, where a priest comes to a private home to visit and conducts a special ceremony of blessings for the home and its inhabitants.[165]

Supporting priests could take on various forms. Such acts might include clothing priests, taking care of them with one's property, receiving priests in one's house "for a period of at least forty days," granting to priests a more general "use of [one's] house," and revering them.[166] Among the rewards which one could expect from such acts of generosity and hospitality were that one would be treated better on the Day of Judgment, receive pardon for "whatever sinful sin" one had "committed during that time" of service to the priests, as well as the priests' effective "intercession." The text articulated its identification of the "power in heaven and on earth" which the priests held and from which they dispensed benefits against the background of the biblical verses in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18. Yet instead of taking the more general approach of granting the priests the power to bind and to loose, the *AAGJ* described the details and consequences of this power within the context of the forgiveness of sins.[167] While the text presumed that Christ's priests would enter the heavenly kingdom, those who supported the priests could expect to "be their companions in the kingdom of [Christ's] heaven and sons of [Christ's] inheritance."[168] Yet also the priests, who conduct their service properly by "pastur[ing] [Christ's] flock in comfort with the law [that Christ] established in the gospel" were declared "blessed."[169]

For those who do not respect clerics, there are woes. Our text warned "those who mock [Christ's] priests" and "proffer lies against them" of the "torments … without end" that would be their fate.[170] Warnings were extended to "those who remove [Christ's] priests from [Christ's] churches and from [his] altars."[171] In the estimation of the text and the spirituality of the priesthood reflected

164 *AAGJ* 38.31.
165 Personal communications with parishioners of Eastern Christian communities.
166 *AAGJ* 37.78.
167 *AAGJ* 19:6 and 37.78.
168 *AAGJ* 37.78.
169 *AAGJ* 37.82.
170 *AAGJ* 37.94.
171 *AAGJ* 37.101.

therein, the priest represented Christ when "the priest puts on [liturgical] clothing in honor of [Christ's] greatness." Then "[Christ] is with him." Thus, in every liturgy and related acts, the priest was "a holy temple and [Christ was] as though hidden in him." Therefore, it constituted a grave offense against Christ when women and men, "waiting for the arrival of [Christ's] priests" at the liturgy, "do not rise to venerate them."[172] Another offense was that of "removing some property from the altar,"[173] although such an act could be committed by either priests or laity. Warnings were raised against "those who will become cursed in my holy dwellings by my priests," with the text leaving open what range of misbehavior might have prompted priests to punish people in that way.[174]

Our apocalypse joins a concern with sacramental piety to the reverence of the priesthood, another common theme in Christian medieval literature, again presented in the black-and-white exaggeration of the apocalyptic genre. Of great concern was the proper administration and reception of the Eucharist and the proper understanding of the significance of that sacrament. On the positive side, the text declared those blessed who received Christ's Body and Blood "with faith from [his] holy altars" and did so "every day."[175] The expected impact of such practices was that on the very day and thus on every day of their communion, Christ would "ascribe to them no sin, but … place mercy in their hearts."[176] The communicant, moreover, was promised to experience intimate union with Christ in this world, with Christ being in the communicant and the communicant being in Christ. For the world to come, the one who received the Eucharist daily could not only expect not to be judged, but to enter directly from the judgment to eternal life.[177]

Alongside this detailed statement of the positive benefits of receiving Christ's Body and Blood, the text spelled out several warnings for those who disrespected the Eucharist. Thus, the *AAGJ* predicted endless torments for "those who mock [Christ's] Flesh and Blood."[178] Neglect of proper disposure to the sacrament, for instance by "having broken the fast" already before "receiv[ing] [Christ's] Body,"[179] by "giving [one]sel[f] over to amusements during periods in

172 *AAGJ* 37.98.
173 *AAGJ* 37.95.
174 *AAGJ* 37.96.
175 *AAGJ* 37.74 and 37.83.
176 *AAGJ* 37.74.
177 *AAGJ* 37.83.
178 *AAGJ* 37.94.
179 *AAGJ* 37.98.

which priests distribute [Christ's] Body,"[180] or by working on Sundays, the day of the resurrection, and "not receiv[ing] [Christ's] Body," but instead "be[ing] absorbed in [one's] fleeting and transient commerce" were considered grave offenses.[181]

A substitutionary tone, with a somewhat supercessionist flavor, weaves through the more detailed description of the administration of the celebration of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is presented in sacrificial terminology as "divine sacrifices of white and most subtle flour" that "will be [Christ's] Body … for the remission of sins for all those who will receive it with faith" and "a drink of pure juice of life" such that "it will be the image of my pure Blood." This new sacrifice is said to replace Jerusalem's "sacrifices of calves, goats, [and] rams" that involved "blood and fat and black ash[es]." Likewise, the text conducted a comparison of the two sets of priestly services and gave preference to the Christian minister's service when it formulated that the "written precepts and the Aaronitic incense" together with "the smell of putrefied fats" was replaced with "the incense of many pleasant perfumes." The text stated that the "sweetest" fragrances were those offered by Christ's servant "who in front of [Christ] will not cease to offer up incense." The pronounced emphasis rested on seeing in the Eucharist the "establish[ing of] the remission of sins and the pardon of offenses."[182]

Although the new sacrifice of the Eucharist and the service of the Christian priest replaced those of ancient Israel, no single Christian community was secure as being the exclusive and permanent proprietor of that new establishment. The *AAGJ* stated explicitly that Christ "ha[s] given … the priesthood and this prophecy," that is, the explications concerning them in the apocalyptic material of the text, but would also "give them to whomever [he] want[ed] among the nations."[183] Although the priesthood was highly regarded, respected, and treasured, it was not the exclusive possession of any one people, but in principle was available and accessible to all.

9 Conclusions

In the *Arabic Apocryphal Gospel of John*, the reader encounters eschatological sermons Christ delivered to his disciples within an apocryphal account of

180 *AAGJ* 37.101.
181 *AAGJ* 37.100.
182 *AAGJ* 38.11–12.
183 *AAGJ* 38.25.

Jesus' life. This set-up provided a suitable environment in which to convey a message that focused on the preservation of the Christian Church, including on the one hand the Church's hierarchical and clerical structures and, on the other hand, the spirituality and Christian social life among the laity. The author or redactor of the *AAGJ* articulated this overarching ecclesiological concern through interweaving several main topics that focused, in their own turn, on how the individual Christian faithful ought to live and how the structures of the Church needed to be organized. Thus, the strategies and tactics for survival and preservation which the text brought to its readers' attention and the themes the text highlighted in view of pursuing those goals included emphasizing the need to preserve the Christian faith and one's cultural identity in the face of the inimical "other," articulating the faith through a cross-centered Christology, warning Christian believers of the threats to the integrity of the structure and substance of Christian family life, using demonizing language for one's enemies, and placing a heightened positive valorization on Christian martyr cults. Much emphasis was placed on the preservation and restoration of the structures of the Church, with a strong focus on the support of the priestly ministry. Within the apocalyptic material that is integrated into the *AAGJ*, the figure of Christ encouraged persistence and coherence across all layers of the hierarchy and among the laity. The author or redactor of the text availed himself of the apocalyptic mode as a tool to promote building and preserving the Christian community. The text developed the main themes within its apocalyptic discourse in the service of the spiritual, social, and practical theological dimensions of ecclesiology within a context of Christian-Muslim polemics that was relevant from the rise of Islam until at least the twelfth and fourteenth centuries when the two manuscripts that preserve the *Arabic Apocryphal Gospel of John* were copied.

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CHAPTER 7

The Rationality of Christian Doctrine: Abū Rāʾiṭa al-Takrītī's Philosophical Response to Islam

Sandra Toenies Keating

The Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) lay theologian, Abū Rāʾiṭa al-Takrītī (d. ca. 830), was a well-known Christian writing in Arabic at the turn of the ninth century. Along with those of the Melkite bishop Theodore Abū Qurra (d. after 816) and the East Syrian (Nestorian) Patriarch Timothy I (d. 823), Abū Rāʾiṭa's works mark a high point of intellectual engagement with Islam. The early ʿAbbāsid period was also when the Arabic translation movement gained momentum with the patronage of the caliphs al-Mahdī (d. 785) and al-Maʾmūn (d. 833). The increasing interest of Muslims in Greek thought, coupled with the availability of important texts in Arabic allowed Christians to make use of the Classical heritage in their apologetic writings. They began to address theological challenges in a systematic way, using the philosophical resources at their disposal, in the language of their opponents. They were not the first Christians to respond to Islam, and not the first to use Arabic—numerous extant texts reveal that Christians addressed Muslim claims within the first decades of the appearance of the new religion. These three writers, however, were particularly concerned to confront the Muslim charge that Christian teachings appear to be irrational. Abū Rāʾiṭa addressed this problem in nearly all of his extant writings, working to present a coherent explanation of the two foundational Christian doctrines—that God is both one and three, and that God has become human.

The issue that faced Muslim and Christian scholars was how to establish common authorities from which convincing arguments could be made. Since Christians did not accept the Qurʾān, and Muslims were cautious about the Bible, a different, more "neutral" authority needed to be identified if apologetical exchanges were to have any success. The search for such authorities is readily apparent in Abū Rāʾiṭa's works as he puts forth both scriptural and philosophical arguments to make his case. He is aware that scriptural proofs may not be convincing to Muslims, but seems to include them in a limited manner to bolster his fellow Christians. Nonetheless, by the end of the eighth century, the problem of *taḥrīf* (corruption) severely limited the usefulness of scripture for responding to Muslims.

I have written more extensively elsewhere about Abū Rāʾiṭa's underlying concern to refute the challenge of *taḥrīf*, the Muslim teaching that Jewish and

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Christian scriptures have been altered or misunderstood, and so are unreliable.[1] *Taḥrīf*, even in its most benign version that claimed the Qur'ān corrected misinterpretations of the Bible, posed an almost insurmountable challenge to those who responded to the religion of the new rulers. Previously, internal debates among Christians had always agreed upon the integrity of the Holy Scriptures, even when their meaning and implications were disputed. With the assertion that the Qur'ān was the final arbiter of scriptural truth, the Bible became nearly useless in Christian apologetics with Muslims, since Muslims could argue that the text had been altered in some way by human error when it conflicted with the Qur'ān. As a consequence, Christian theologians began to abandon strategies that included disputation of scriptural passages and sought alternatives to the impasse. Abū Rā'iṭa is among the first, whose name is known, to begin formulating clear arguments in Arabic based in classical, particularly Aristotelian, philosophy. His exposition concerning the Holy Trinity was widely repeated in the Christian community, and fully developed later by Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (d. 974).[2] In response to Muslim challenges to Christian teachings, Abū Rā'iṭa revives a strategy well known from the early Church Fathers in their debates with learned pagans, rather than employ methods used in engagement with the Jews or other Christians. He begins his arguments not with what the two communities disagree on, such as the possibility of the Incarnation or whether Muḥammad was a prophet; instead, he lays the groundwork for his

1 Sandra Toenies Keating, "Revisiting the Charge of *Taḥrīf*: The Question of Supersessionism in Early Islam and the Qur'ān," in *Nicholas of Cusa and Islam: Polemic and Dialogue in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. I.C. Levy, R. George-Tvrtković and D. Duclow (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 202–217. Although the teaching of *taḥrīf* was not fully developed until centuries after Muḥammad, its foundations in the Qur'ān are clear, and it became a theme very early in discussions between Muslims and Christians. Perhaps the first moment when the charge arises is the disagreement over whether Muḥammad was predicted in the Jewish and Christian scripture, as the Qur'ān seems to claim. The lack of a clear prediction in the Bible gave rise to many Muslim explanations ranging from misinterpretation to actual tampering with the text, which compelled Christians to respond. See, for example, Sandra Keating, "The Paraclete, Muḥammad and the Integrity of Scripture," in *Theological Issues in Christian-Muslim Dialogue*, ed. Charles Tieszen (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018), 15–25.

2 Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, a Syrian Orthodox Christian well-known as a philosopher, theologian and translator, wrote several treatises in defense of Christian doctrine. For an excellent summary of his explanation of Trinitarian teachings, see Avril Mary Makhlouf, "The Trinitarian Doctrine of Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī: An Appraisal," *Parole de l'Orient* 10 (1981–1982): here 43–47. See also Augustin Périer, *Yaḥyâ ben ʿAdî: Un philosophe arab chrétien du xe siècle* (Paris: J. Gabalda, P. Geuthner, 1920), 122–191. See also Kamal Bualwan, "Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī's Conception of 'The One'," *Parole de l'Orient* 28 (2003): 485–495. For an exhaustive list of ibn ʿAdī's writings on Christian doctrines and Muslim responses to them, see Gerhard Endress, *The Works of Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī: An Analytical Inventory* (Weisbaden: L. Reichert, 1977), 99–106.

answers to these problems by establishing what both Muslims and Christians agree is logical and rational—the unity and oneness of God.

This approach required familiarity with logic and philosophical principals, and by the end of the eighth century, most Muslim intellectuals were well aware of the Greek philosophical tradition. Christian converts to Islam, Muslims who had been educated by learned Jews and Christians, and the Hellenistic cosmology that shaped the Byzantine worldview spurred the Arabic translation movement to make Greek texts available to literate Muslims. Already translations of individual texts of Plato, Aristotle, Porphyry, Plotinus and Proclus, among others, had been made in the middle of the eighth century. By Abū Rā'iṭa's active period, the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 813–833) was providing substantial backing for translation of texts into Arabic in Baghdad.[3] Of course, Christians such as Abū Rā'iṭa already knew these texts from their Syriac recension, and had the advantage of centuries of engagement with Greek thought.

1 The First *Risāla* "On the Holy Trinity"

In his most influential work, the *Risāla* "On the Holy Trinity," Abū Rā'iṭa begins his explication of the rationality of the Trinity with a definition of the meaning of "one." He is aware that *tawḥīd*, the oneness of God, is the first principle agreed upon with Muslims and an important source of their skepticism about Christianity—how could one assert that God is *both* one and three, and further, maintain this position without implying the existence of multiple gods? Previous attempts to base the teaching of the Trinity in biblical witnesses had apparently failed in the face of accusations of alteration of the scriptures. This leads Abū Rā'iṭa to take advantage of the now common authority of the Hellenistic philosophers, who could be seen as "neutral parties" in the debate. He seizes on the Muslim claim that "you do not deny our description of God as one" (§ 4)[4] and asks his opponents to explain what they mean when they say "one." Abū Rā'iṭa gives them three options: God must either be one in genus,

3 For an excellent brief summary of the translation movement, see Cristina D'Ancona, "Greek Sources in Arabic and Islamic Philosophy," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (*Winter 2017 Edition*), ed. Edward N. Zalta, online: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/arabic-islamic-greek; Peter Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World: A History of Philosophy without Any Gaps*, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 19–25, and Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ʿAbbāsid Society* (*2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries*) (London: Routledge, 1998), 61–74.

4 Sandra Toenies Keating, *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Early Islamic Period: The Christian Apologies of Abū Rā'iṭah* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 169.

one in species, or one in number, and asks them to choose. He is prepared to reject two, one in genus and one in number, in order to support his assertion that it is not contradictory to say that God is both one and three.

He does not explain his arguments in detail, and assumes his reader will grasp the complex issues that lie behind his statements. However, a clue for understanding Abū Rā'iṭa's explanations can be found in the earlier writings of John of Damascus,[5] whose Greek *Dialectica* was readily available to scholars in this period. Using Aristotle's distinctions, John provides an extensive explanation of the various definitions of "one," along with examples, which he later uses to explain the doctrine of the Trinity. In *Metaphysics* 5.6, Aristotle states that "one" can be that which subsists according to accident or subsists essentially. For those things which are one essentially, "some things are one numerically (κατ' ἀριθμόν), others formally (κατ' εἶδος),[6] others generically (κατὰ γένος), and others analogically [κατ' ἀναλογίαν]."[7] Each of these four alternatives defines "one" differently and creates a category in which various subjects that share a common characteristic can be included: "numerically, those whose matter (ὕλη) is one; formally, those whose definition is one; generically, those which belong to the same category; and analogically, those which have the same relation as something else to some third object."[8] These are certainly the distinctions that Abū Rā'iṭa has in mind as he puts forward his argument under the authority of the "People of Wisdom" (اهل الحكمة) (§ 9),[9] that is, the philosophers Plato and Aristotle, who were held in high regard by Muslim *mutakallimūn*. No doubt he believes that an appeal to these figures will contribute to the effectiveness of his assertions.

Employing three of the four categories (number, genus and species), Abū Rā'iṭa immediately narrows the possibilities of adequate definitions of "one" in relation to God to that of "one in species," arguing that God can be neither "one in genus" nor "one in number." Although he does not present the positions of

5 John of Damascus was a Chalcedonian Christian, and there is no evidence to-date that Abū Rā'iṭa used his writings directly. However, the philosophical ideas he employs were current among Christian scholars of the period, and John's explanations often provide a fuller picture than many of his contemporaries, who assume what is common knowledge.

6 That is, according to species. For this particular problem see Adamson, *Philosophy in the Islamic World*, 23.

7 Aristotle, *Metaphysics. Books I–IX*, vol. 17, trans. by Hugh Tredennick, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: St. Edmundsbury Press Ltd., 1933, repr. 1996), 5.6 [1016b].

8 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.6 [1016b].

9 Keating, *Defending*, 175.

his adversaries explicitly here, one can surmise from the length of his refutation of "one in number" that he expects that this will be their opinion. The reason for this becomes clearer later in the treatise where he makes the point that all of the religions (ملّة), "with the exception of the Christians, do not hesitate to describe [God] as one, single, and numerable" (§15).[10] However, as Abū Rā'iṭa will demonstrate, Christians reject "numerable" while simultaneously attributing a plurality to the Divine Being.

First, he begins by disproving the view that God is "one in genus." God cannot be "one in genus," because genus encompasses various species; Aristotle asserts that it contains things "which belong to the same category."[11] That is, genus includes things that share a common characteristic. Accordingly, things that are "one in genus" may be distinguished by opposite differentiae [ταῖς ἀντικειμέναις διαφοραῖς]; thus, these things are "said to be 'one' because the genus, which is the substrate [τὸ ὑποκείμενον] of the differentiae, is one … and that in a way very similar to that in which the matter is one [ἡ ὕλη μία]," just as a man and a dog are both animals.[12] Abū Rā'iṭa argues that God's oneness cannot be defined in this way without implying that divinity is simply a common characteristic of various species of things, similar to matter (§8).[13] Thus, one would not be able say that "nothing is like God," since other species might belong to the genus of divinity.[14]

Neither is God "one in number," he claims, since a thing that is one in number implies a plurality of things that are similar (§8). Aristotle writes that the very essence of "one" is "to be a kind of starting-point of number; for the first measure is a starting-point, because that by which we first gain knowledge of a thing is the first measure of each class of objects. "The one," then, is the starting-point of what is knowable in respect of each particular thing."[15] Those things which share matter, but are distinguished by their accidents and so exist as individu-

10 ما خلا النصارى لم ان يصفة ولحدا فردا معدودا (Keating, *Defending*, 174).

11 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.6 [1016b].

12 Ibid., 5.6 [1015a].

13 *Defending*, 173. A similar definition is found in John of Damascus: "Now, that which includes several species is called *genus*, … and is more universal than the species … *Genus* is that which is predicated—that is, affirmed and expressed (for to be predicated is to be affirmed in respect to something)—of several things that are specifically different in respect to what pertains to their essence." *Dialectica* 5. John of Damascus, *Writings*, trans. F.H. Chase, Jr., *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 37 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press), 19.

14 Salim Daccache, "Polémique, logique et elaboration théologique chez Abū Rā'iṭa al-Takrītī," *Annales de Philosophie* 6 (1985): 33–88, here 48.

15 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.6 [1016b].

als, belong to a single class. "One" is the first of this class, the first thing by which the class is known. "One in number" thus indicates that more things which are similar are contained in the class.

Secondly, Aristotle maintains that "number" refers to a discrete quantity. It is a type of quantity that has parts that do not have relative positions in reference to each other. Since the parts are always discontinuous and no two numbers have a common boundary, they are eternally separate. For example, the parts "three" and "seven" will make "ten," but these numbers will always remain wholly distinct and never coalesce.[16] Thus, the definition of "one in number" refers to something with distinct parts, which include "one," and implies limitation and separation.

Abū Rā'iṭa does not give the details of his own argument, but simply insists that Muslims cannot accept the definition of "one in number" because it contradicts their statement that nothing is like God (Q 112:4). He raises the further point that every person believes he is one since he is an individual distinguishable from another person.[17] The Divine Being, on the contrary, is unlike human beings and other things in creation that are identified by their characteristics as individuals within a single category. By this Abū Rā'iṭa means that God does not belong in a class that is shared by other gods, distinguished by their accidents. The existence of multiple divine beings requires that each god be limited by the boundaries of the other, and set apart from other individuals by peculiar characteristics. In fact, John of Damascus asserts that these characteristic properties necessarily distinguish the *hypostasis*, and that it is "impossible for two hypostases not to differ from each other in their accidents and still to differ from each other numerically."[18] This element will become a central feature in Abū Rā'iṭa's argument.

Further, according to Abū Rā'iṭa, since number is a quantity with discrete parts, the definition "one in number" necessarily introduces diminution and division, and thus imperfection, into God. Diminution and division are necessary consequences of the characteristic properties that distinguish members of a class.[19] Hence, if God is "one in number," he cannot be "perfect without being divided into parts" (§ 8).[20] Finally, "one" belongs to the species of odd numbers,

16 Aristotle, *The Categories. On Interpretation. Prior Analytics*., vol. 1, trans. and ed. by H.P. Cooke and H. Tredennick, *The Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University press; London: William Heinemann, 1983), *Categories* 6 [4b].

17 Cf. John of Damascus' example of Socrates (*Dialectica* 37), and the man and animal in Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 6.5 [1016b].

18 John of Damascus, *Dialectica* 30.

19 Daccache, "Abū Rā'iṭa," 48.

20 Keating, *Defending*, 175.

and, he states, "the perfection of number is what encompasses all species of number." Thus, "one in number" is an inadequate description for God (§ 10).[21] God can only be described by a definition that communicates perfection.

Knowing that his adversaries may try to avoid the question by declaring that nothing is like God and no one can describe Him, Abū Rā'iṭa continues to press them to choose one of the possible definitions. It is here that he leads them to the description that he believes is more acceptable: God is "one in species." This definition, however, must be carefully delimited. Once again, he only gives the bare outlines of his position, presuming his listeners will recognize its roots in classical sources. He asks his opponents if they accept "one in species," pointing out that this implies a multiplicity in God, since the definition of species is that it is comprised of "different beings, not one single [being], even if [they] are one in *ousia* [خوهر]" (§ 9).[22]

One finds a similar explanation in Aristotle, who defines "species" as that which includes multiple individuals that share a common *ousia*. Of the two secondary *ousiai* (genus and species), species is more truly *ousia* than genus, since it is closer to the individual, the primary *ousia*. This means that species describes what something is more precisely than genus.[23] John of Damascus explains further that it is species, not genus, which is comprised of individuals, it is the "common essence of several things which are numerically different."[24] He writes that species "… is what is called *nature* and *substance* and *form* by the holy Fathers."[25]

When his opponents choose the description of God as "one in species," Abū Rā'iṭa forces them to define the term and distinguish it from "one in number." He claims that according to their definitions, the two expressions cannot be differentiated. However, this deviates from the philosophers who define "species" as consisting of several numbers, while "number" includes only itself. Consequently, if they say that God is "one in species," they must allow distinguishable individuals in the Divine Being, and this is contradictory to their view that there are no *hypostaseis* in God. On the other hand, if they say that "one in species" is the same as "one in number," then they are opposing the wisdom of the ancient philosophers (§ 9).[26]

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21 Ibid., 177.

22 Ibid., 175.

23 Aristotle, *Categories* 5 [2a–2b].

24 John of Damascus, *Dialectica* 10.

25 Ibid., 5. The "Fathers" here include, for example, Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomius* IV.9 (*PG* 45, col. 672A) and Theodoret, *Dialogue* I (*PG* 83, col. 73AC).

26 Keating, *Defending*, 175.

Abū Rā'iṭa is carefully maneuvering the debate so as to force his opponents to choose a definition of "one" that will logically lead to the conclusion that God can be simultaneously one and three. The astute reader will immediately recognize where he is headed with the argument by his use of the phrase *fī l-jawhar wāḥid*, "one in *ousia*." This is the term he most commonly uses to render ὁμοούσιος, and it appears throughout his writings in connection with the Trinity and Incarnation. In this context, Abū Rā'iṭa implicitly adopts the traditional definition of species as a secondary *ousia* comprised of multiple individuals (the primary *ousiai*), and, as John of Damascus noted, the equivalent of nature, substance, and form. Within this category of species (*ousia*), individuals can be identified by their distinguishing accidents.

Implied here in Abū Rā'iṭa's argument is the classical understanding of a *hypostasis* as that individual characterized by peculiar properties. Once again, John of Damascus gives a more explicit and extensive definition of the terms:

> A *person* is one who by reason of his own operations and properties exhibits to us an appearance which is distinct and set off from those of the same nature as he … One should know that the holy Fathers used the terms *hypostasis* and *person* and *individual* for the same thing, namely, that which by its own subsistence subsists of itself from substance and accidents, is numerically different and signifies a certain one, as, for example, Peter, and Paul, and this horse. *Hypostasis* has been so called from its ὑφεστάναι, or subsisting.[27]

Accordingly, a species consists of several *hypostaseis*, which subsist as individuals distinguished numerically and by their accidents. By choosing the description of God as "one in species," Abū Rā'iṭa is able to formulate his argument that God is both one *ousia* ("one in species"), as well as three in *hypostaseis* ("three in number").

The adversaries may press, however, Abū Rā'iṭa notes, demanding how it is that Christians can describe God as "one in number," and yet not as a part or as a perfect whole. This is confused, Abū Rā'iṭa shows, for Christians do not say this, since God is a single perfect whole in *ousia* (*jawhar*), not in number. In number, God is three *hypostaseis*. This is the perfect description, he says, for in the one divine *ousia*, "He is exalted and above all His creatures, be it His perceptible or His intellectually comprehensible creation—nothing is comparable to

27 John of Damascus, *Dialectica* 43.

him, nothing is mixed with him, He is simple, without density, incorporeal, His *ousia* approaches everything closely without blending or mixing."[28]

In asserting that God is "one in *ousia*," Abū Rā'iṭa is defining the term in opposition to the manner in which it was understood by contemporaneous Muslim *mutakallimūn*. The Arabic *jawhar* (جوهر), drawn originally from Pahlavi, was generally understood in Muslim circles as what exists in reality (الموجود بالحقيقة). All concrete individuals found in the world are substances in the fullest sense, the first *ousia* (πρῶται οὐσίαι), which is the most important of Aristotle's categories.[29] The *mutakallimūn* further held *ousia* to be something similar to an atom, a constructive principle or fundamental element of the ontological structure of created beings. Consequently, God could not be an *ousia*, because He would then be like other beings.[30]

Christian theologians, on the contrary, accepted a definition of *ousia* that followed the explanation of "one" in the *Metaphysics*: something is called "one" whose essence is indivisible in every case and every thought, and cannot be separated in time, place, or definition.[31] Abū Rā'iṭa describes this as the perfection of God's quiddity (ماهية), affirming that He is a "perfect one" (واحد كامل), without division or separation, simple and non-composite. It is not in *ousia* that God is three (as this would lead to tritheism); rather, God is absolutely one in *ousia*, yet three in number, understood as three *hypostaseis*, identifying the

28 Keating, *Defending*, 177. فلاعتلائه عن جميع خلقه وبريته محسوسة كانت ام معقولة لم يشبهه شيء ولم يختلط به غيره بسيط غير كثوف روحانى غير جسمانى يات على كل بقرب جوهره من غير امتزاج ولا لختلاط.

One sees a clear reliance here in Abū Rā'iṭa's strategy on the Cappadocian arguments concerning the Trinity, particularly those of Basil. In *Ep*. 8, Basil explains the necessity of clarifying the definition of "one" in speech about God, with the instruction that "Against those who cast it in our teeth that we are Tritheists, let it be answered that we confess one God not in number but in nature. For everything which is called one in number is not one absolutely, nor yet simple in nature, but God is universally confessed to be simple and not composite." *PG* 32, col. 248; English translation in John R. Willis, ed., *The Teachings of the Church Fathers* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966, 272). Abū Rā'iṭa, who appeals to the authority of Basil in several of his other letters, would have found here a ready response to the Muslim suspicion that Christians worship three gods in the Trinity.

29 Van den Bergh, "Djawhar," in *EI2*, 2:493.

30 Daccache, "Abū Rā'iṭa," 179–180; Richard M. Frank, *The Metaphysics of Created Being According to Abū l-Hudhayl al-Allāf: A Philosophical Study of the Earliest Kalām* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archelogisch Instituut in het Nabije Oosten, 1966), 39–41; Richard M. Frank, *Beings and Their Attributes: The Teaching of the Basrian School of the Mu'tazila in the Classical Period* (Albany: State Universtiy of New York Press, 1978).

31 5.6 [1016b].

manner in which unity does not exclude multiplicity.[32] In this way, Abū Rā'iṭa preserves both the doctrine of the Trinity and the assertion that nothing is like God. He adds to this a numerological proof, arguing that whereas "one" is only a single number, or a part of number, and belongs to the species of odd numbers, the number "three" includes both species—odd ("one") plus even ("two"). By encompassing all species of number, the three *hypostaseis* reflect the perfection of number.[33] Nonetheless, Abū Rā'iṭa is quick to point out, no definition of God constructed by human beings "is equivalent to His perfect description" (§10).[34] From this explanation, his adversaries should recognize that although Muslims and Christians describe God as one, they do not mean the same thing by it.

Through a series of questions and answers, Abū Rā'iṭa has shown his reader how to lead his opponents skillfully to the position that is the foundation for all of his subsequent arguments. First, he requests that they define the meaning of the statement that "God is one" precisely. Following the traditional Aristotelian distinctions (and thereby adding the authority of the ancient, non-Christian, philosophers to his arsenal of support), he presents them with three possible definitions: one in genus, one in species, or one in number. "One in genus" is eliminated because divinity is not simply a characteristic shared by several species. Nor is God "one in number," since number implies a single individual in a class of other individuals, and this is not possible with God. Finally, Abū Rā'iṭa narrows the definition of "one in species" to exclude any meaning of its equivalent to "one in number." Instead, he insists that God is "one in species" where species is understood as a common *ousia* shared by multiple individuals distinguished by peculiar characteristics. Through this series of logical moves, he has led his opponent to the Christian description of God: one in *ousia*, three in *hypostaseis*.

Abū Rā'iṭa next turns to the four names that Muslims claim they can agree on for God: living (حيّ), knowing (عالم), hearing (سميع), and seeing (بصير), to determine whether there is true consensus. These descriptions are drawn from the Qur'ān, and are found both in the creed (*ʿaqīda*) of the Muʿtazila reported by

32 Daccache, "Abū Rā'iṭa," 49–50; Griffith, "Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidmah Abū Rā'iṭah, a Christian *mutakallim* of the First Abbasid Century," *Oriens Christianus* 64 (1980): 161–201, here 180.

33 Although such numerical "proofs" are common in ancient and patristic writings, I have been unable to trace this particular example to an identifiable source. It is possible that it is original to Abū Rā'iṭa. Griffith points out that a much more extensive explanation is found in the later Syriac apology of Nonnus of Nisibis, who got it from Abū Rā'iṭa (Griffith, "Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidmah Abū Rā'iṭah," 181).

34 Keating, *Defending*, 177.

al-Ashʿarī and the *Fiqh Akbar II*.[35] They were also at the center of the contemporary debate about the divine attributes, the *ṣifāt Allāh*.[36] Abū Rā'iṭa shrewdly picks up three of the names, living, seeing and knowing (leaving aside hearing), which he will later identify as the three divine *hypostaseis* commonly mentioned in the Church Fathers as God's life (πνεῦμα), wisdom (λόγος) and knowledge (νοῦς).[37] The first step in his proof is to establish the relationship of these names to God, and to show they are inseparable from the Divine Being.

Following categories similar to those established by Aristotle, and developed in the theory of knowledge of Basil of Caesarea, he asks his opponent to characterize these attributes as either single, absolute names (اسماء مفردة مرسلة), or as predicative names (اسماء مضافة) (§10).[38] The first of these, absolute names, refers to terms that signify something that cannot be predicated of another thing. According to the classical definition, an absolute term associates a thing with other things belonging to the same category and sharing a common characteristic. Essentially, an absolute name is a description of a thing that does not define its relationship to another different thing (e.g., Peter's book), nor is it a composite (e.g., the dog is white). Consequently, it cannot be said to be true or false.[39] John of Damascus explains in his *Dialectica* that every absolute

35 Just after the opening of the "First *Risāla* 'On the Holy Trinity'," Abū Rā'iṭa provides an extensive list of the divine attributes that his opponents suggest they agree on. Of these, seventeen can be found in identical or similar form in the Qur'ān, while another fifteen are expressions of Muslim beliefs consistent with the scriptures. The relevant attributes for this discussion, God is one (e.g., Q 39:4), living (Q 2:255; 3:2; 40:65), knowing (Q 59:22, and other indirect verses, such as 3:29), seeing and hearing (e.g., Q 22:61), are at the head of the list. It is worthy of note that the list given by Abū Rā'iṭa appears to accurately reflect Muslim beliefs and predates the *ʿaqīda* of the Muʿtazila and the *Fiqh Akbar II*, making it a significant witness to the period. Sandra T. Keating, "An Early List of the *Ṣifāt Allāh* in Abū Rā'iṭa al-Takrītī's "First *Risāla* 'On the Holy Trinity'"," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36 (2009): 339–355; Arent J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932; reprint: New Delhi: Oriental Books Reprint Corp, 1979), chapters I and II.

36 Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl al-Ashʿarī, *Kitāb Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*, ed. Hellmut Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963), 155–156; Harry A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), 112–146.

37 Rachid Haddad, *La Trinité divine chez les théologiens arabes 750–1050* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985), 123–124.

38 Keating, *Defending*, 177.

39 *Contra Eunomius* (*PG* 29, cols. 497 ff.). One finds a comparable distinction in Clement of Alexandria's *Stromata*, where he speaks of predicates that are expressed either from what belongs to things themselves or from their mutual relation. He emphasizes, however, that such names are not acceptable in reference to God, and are only used to keep certain points in mind and avoid error in other respects (*Stromata* 5.12 [*PG* 9, col. 121]).

term must fall into one of ten categories.[40] Each of these categories, such as substance or quantity, contains things that are generically the same. For example, "two," "white," and "standing" are terms which, in and of themselves simply describe categories of things that can be said to belong to the general genera of "two," "white," or "standing."[41] Abū Rā'iṭa offers the terms "earth," "heaven," and "fire," which belong to the category of substance, to illustrate his meaning and remind his listener of these distinctions (§ 11).[42]

The second type of terms Abū Rā'iṭa discusses are those that are related to something else and that define a particular relationship. He calls these "predicative" or "relative names." For example the terms "knowledge," "seeing," and "wisdom" are related to the "knower," "seer," and "wise person." The person who knows does so through knowledge, and that knowledge is the knowledge of a knower. This is also the case with "sight" and "wisdom," and any other thing that is related to something else. One finds a similar explanation of a relative (πρός τι) in Aristotle, when he writes that "We call a thing relative, when it is said to be such that it is from its being *of* some other thing or, if not, from its being related to something in some other way."[43] Thus, knowledge is knowledge *of* what is knowable and is the knowledge *of* a knower. There are many ways a thing can be related to another thing, such as habit, disposition, or attitude, and this refers to the manner of the relation to the thing to which something belongs. Consequently, a relative term has a correlative expression which brings out the relation to that to which it is related: a "father" is the father of a son, and "son" in turn implies a father.[44]

The problem of establishing the relationship between divine attributes and the Divine Being within the constraints of monotheism and what was known of Hellenistic philosophy was the central problem confronting Muslims scholars of the period.[45] The Muʿtazila maintained that a fundamental unity existed between the divine attributes, such as life and knowledge, and the divine essence, since any distinction between them would amount to a multiplicity in God and endanger His absolute oneness. Thus, Abū al-Hudhayl could say that "the knowledge of God is God."[46] The question soon arose, however, of the

40 The categories, drawn from Aristotle, are substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, and affection (*Categories* 4 [1b]).

41 John of Damascus, *Dialectica* 48.

42 Keating, *Defending*, 177.

43 Aristotle, *Categories* 7 [6a].

44 Ibid. [6b]; see also John of Damascus, *Dialectica* 50.

45 Frank, *Beings*, 1–38.

46 Daniel Gimaret, "Muʿtazila," in *EI2*, 7:783–793; online: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0822 (Accessed 15 January 2018).

exact nature of the relationship between God's attributes and God's essence. An attribute had to be either eternal or contingent, that is, acquired at a certain point in time. The former posited two or more eternal things, leading to polytheism. But if an attribute were contingent and acquired, then change would be ascribed to the divinity, destroying its perfection.

This concern became greater as more and more Greek philosophy was appropriated in Muslim intellectual circles. In defense of the divine unicity, many Muʿtazila came to deny the actual existence of attributes, arguing that they are only the consequence of the limitations of human perception. The multiplicity of attributes is due to the multiple intellectual faculties by which *human beings* apprehend creation, not to actual existent things. Consequently, what is identified as a divine attribute in no way resembles creatures, nor does it correspond to a positive reality in God. Instead, to say that God has knowledge is in fact to say that He is *without ignorance*. This position also led the Muʿtazila to deny the usefulness of analogy in speaking about God, since nothing is like God.[47]

The Muʿtazila came into conflict, however, with the traditionalists, who held that the descriptions found in the Qurʾān must necessarily take priority in speech about God. While they agreed that the absolute unity of God could not be compromised, they argued that references to God's knowledge, life, and speech referred to an actual reality. Further, the traditionalists insisted that because revelation must be able to be understood according to its obvious meaning,[48] even difficult verses, such as the statement that God sits on the Throne (Q 20:5), must be true in a real, not analogous, sense. The dispute eventually came to a head over the question of the relationship between God and His speech—is the Qurʾān created and separate from the Divine Being, as the Muʿtazila maintained, or is it uncreated and eternally related to God?[49] Traditionalists such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal contended that the proof that God's Word is not created is that creation comes through the divine command to "Be!" and God's Word cannot create itself. Ibn Ḥanbal seems to have been aware of the implications of accepting the existence of real attributes in the Divine Being,

47 Daccache, "Abū Rāʾiṭa," 43–47; Gimaret, "Muʿtazila"; Michel Allard, *Le problème des attributs divins dans la doctrine d'al-Aš'arī et de ses premiers grands disciples* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1965).

48 This is not to be confused with the literal sense. Ibn Ḥanbal and his followers, for example, rejected interpretations that assumed a hidden or analogous meaning that require esoteric knowledge and would destroy the claim of the Qurʾān to be a "clear revelation" (e.g., Q 16:89) that is accessible to all Arabic-speakers. See Sandra Toenies Keating, "The Issue of the Createdness of the *Qurʾān* in the 'Refutation of the *Ǧahmites*' by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal" (Licentiate thesis, Pontificio Istituto di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica, 1995).

49 Wolfson, *Kalam*, 234–278.

and of the Christian exploitation of this idea. Therefore, he was careful to avoid speaking of divine attributes in relational terms, preferring to say only that a particular attribute has "never ceased to be with Him."[50]

The arguments Abū Rā'iṭa constructs in his *Risāla "On the Trinity"* are primarily directed towards traditionalists who, like Ibn Ḥanbal, accept that the attributes of God are a reality that exist eternally in the Divine Being.[51] He seizes upon the opening offered by the distinctions allowed by this premise to demonstrate logically that God's attributes are predicative, that is, they say something about a reality that can be known in the Divine Being. In drawing the distinction between absolute and relative terms, Abū Rā'iṭa is hinting at the intricate and complex descriptions of the relationships among a noun, verb and verbal noun (*maṣdar*) that had been developed by Arab grammarians the previous century.[52] Grammatically attributes (*ṣifāt*) function as adjectives that express a true proposition about the subject: God is knowing because God has knowledge. Contrary to Abū al-Hudhayl, Abū Rā'iṭa would contend, the Knower, knowledge and knowing are *not* identical.

In the second part of his proof, Abū Rā'iṭa turns to the implications of this distinction between absolute and relative names. If the terms "knowing," "living," and "seeing" are predicative, that is, they are the knowledge, life, and wisdom *of God*, in what manner are they *related* to God? Do they belong to the divine *ousia* eternally as inherent properties (الصفات اللازمة), or have they been acquired (اكتسبها اكتساباً) in time because God merited (استوجب) them through some divine action? Finally, are these attributes applied to God because He has caused them (لافتعاله لها) and they are derived (اشتقت له اشتقاقاً) from Him (§12)?

Abū Rā'iṭa assumes that his listeners agree that God acquired and merited some attributes only after a divine act, such as that of "Creator," which describes

50 For example, in the *Radd 'alā al-Ǧahmiyya*, Ibn Ḥanbal is reported as saying that "His power and His illumination have never ceased to be with Him" (لم يزل بقدرته ونوره). Keating, "Ibn Ḥanbal," 45–46. See also Binyamin Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 19–53.

51 Daccache argues to the contrary that Abū Rā'iṭa's interlocutors are Mu'tazila because they were most concerned with these issues (Daccache, "Abū Rā'iṭa," 43–58). However, it is clear even in Daccache's presentation of Mu'tazila thought that they would have rejected his basic premises and most of his arguments outright.

52 A useful summary can be found in Werner Diem, "Nomen, Substantiv und Adjectiv bei den arabischen Grammatikern," *Oriens* 23–24 (1974): 313–316. Many of these grammatical rules were developed in conjunction with qur'ānic exegesis concerned with legal questions and were the subject of intense debate. See for example, Cornelia Schöck, *Koranexegese, Grammatik und Logik: Zum Verhältnis von arabischer und aristotelischer Urteils-, Konsequenz- und Schlußlehre* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 152–229 and Cees H.M. Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'ānic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).

God after He had created and brought forth creation and creatures. However, he argues, this cannot be the case for all attributes, especially living, knowing and wise, because it is impossible that God could have existed without these, even for "a blink of an eye." In fact, to say that God existed without life, knowledge and wisdom is contradictory (§12–13). God is the Being Who *is* living, knowing and wise.[53] When his opponents object to any suggestion that God could have been described as Creator before He had created, Abū Rā'iṭa draws them into another distinction: either God Who "alone has never ceased to exist and has no equal, is originated" (لم يزل وما سواه محدثاً), or creation is eternal with God and not originated (§13).[54]

In this point, Abū Rā'iṭa is addressing two issues. First, he is taking advantage of the distinction available to him in the thought of Muslim *mutakallimūn* between the "attributes of being" (صفات الذات) and the "attributes of operation" (صفات الفعل) to lead his reader to the conclusion that some attributes must be acknowledged as inherent in the Divine Being. Simultaneously, he precludes the possibility of saying that God creates eternally, and therefore that creation is eternal, as some of the Mu'tazila did in keeping with their Neoplatonic views.[55] Second, Abū Rā'iṭa is concerned with formulating his definition of the attributes so as to avoid any suggestion in his subsequent arguments that the incarnate Word is a creature. This points to his sensitivity to potential Arianism and interest in preserving the doctrine of Nicaea, which condemned "those who say: There was when He was not."[56] For this reason he carefully delineates between inherent properties, that is, those attributes that belong to God's very being, and those properties that are acquired.

Some of the opponents may argue with his characterization of "Creator" as an acquired property. Abū Rā'iṭa presses his listeners, asking how it is possible that creation and creatures could be attributed to God before the time when

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53 This is similar to the argument made by John of Damascus (*De fide orthodoxa* 6–7 [*PG* 94, cols. 801C–807B) and Gregory of Nyssa (*Catechetical Orations*, Prologue 2–3 [*PG* 45, cols. 12, 17D–20A]), that God's word and Spirit are distinctly subsistent (ἐνυπόστατον), perfect and eternally existent. John makes the further point that the Christian teaching of the Trinity that emphasizes unity in the divine nature (God's Word and Spirit are subsistent and coeternal), while at the same time preserving the distinction of the persons, safeguards the best of Judaism and Hellenism, and rejects the errors of each (John, *De fide*, 7). His claim is parallel to that of Abū Rā'iṭa, who wishes to demonstrate to the Muslims that Christians are monotheists, not polytheists.

54 Keating, *Defending*, 180–181.

55 Frank, "Divine Attributes," 451–506.

56 J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 3rd ed. (New York: Longman Publishing, 1972), 216. Abū Rā'iṭa's other writings also reflect a great concern to avoid what he regards as the Nestorian tendency to underemphasize the divine nature of Christ.

He decided to creation. He observes that the opponents may use the argument that God "possesses the power to create when He wants" (انه قادر ان يخلق اذا اراد), and therefore it can be said that God was Creator before He created: He is potentially Creator eternally. Abū Rā'iṭa counters that the attribute "Creator" is similar to other divine attributes, which implies that it must also be said that God has not ceased doing other things, such as resurrecting the dead, leading the righteous into the Garden and causing eternal Hell for the deserving. He declares that it is obvious the learned would not accept any description of God that posits a coeternal creation (§14).[57]

Instead, Abū Rā'iṭa urges his opponents to agree to a distinction between what he calls a "natural attribute" (صفة طباعية) and an "acquired attribute" (صفة اكتساب). The former is one that "does not cease [to exist] and describes an inherent property in [God]," whereas the latter, "which [God] has acquired, is an attribute of [God's] operation (صفة فعل)" (§14).[58] Of these two, the terms that describe God essentially and without which God does not exist, such as living, knowing and wise, belong in the category of "natural attributes." However, those that identify a property that arises as a result of divine action, including creation and raising from the dead, are classified as "acquired attributes." Thus, the three attributes of living, knowing and wise can be characterized as "natural attributes" and are eternal and essential to the Divine Being.

Since it is agreed among scholars that living, knowing and wise are not single, absolute names for God, but rather predicative names, the next step is to define what type of a relationship they have to God. A "predicative name," a term introduced previously, is a construct (المأسورة) that denotes an expression

57 Keating, *Defending*, 181. Q 36:81–82 asserts that God, Who created the heavens and the earth, is able to create human beings, for when He wills something, He has only to say "Be!" and it is (see Q 16:40, etc.).

58 Keating, *Defending*, 181. The reference to an acquired attribute is significant here. During the period in which Abū Rā'iṭa is writing, Muslim scholars were debating the question of whether human beings are the authors of their own actions and consequently can be held wholly responsible for them. Traditionalists were hesitant to allow too great a degree of human independence from God for fear of compromising divine omnipotence and determination. One of the central tenets of the Qur'ān is that nothing happens apart from the knowledge and will of God (Q 2:284; 3:26–29; 16:77–81; etc.). At the same time, however, nearly all scholars agreed that evil could not be attributed to God, and divine justice requires that human beings be actually responsible for their own deeds (Q 3:30; etc.). A solution to this problem was found in the doctrine of *kasb*, which held that God creates human acts, which are then acquired (*iktisāb*) by the person. This teaching probably originated with Ḍirār ibn ʿAmr (ca. 730–800) and was a distinctive feature of the theology of al-Ashʿarī and his followers. William Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1998), 191–194.

connected and related (المنسوبة المضافة) to something else. God's life and knowledge are inseparable from His being and are certainly related to Him, because He has not ceased to be living and knowing. Thus, God's life, knowledge and wisdom are eternally related to Him (§15). Further, the relationship is either similar to that of one partner to another (الشريك الى الشريك) or as something from another thing (منه). The former implies something other than God (غيره), while something "from Him" indicates a part of Godself. (§16)[59]

Abū Rā'iṭa knows that only the latter definition of a relationship to God could be acceptable to his Muslim opponents. A central theme of the Qur'ān is the denial of partners of any kind to God. The text very explicitly condemns the worship or honor of anything other than the One God (Q 6:22–23, 163; 17:111; etc.) that might lead to polytheism. To be certain that his listeners do not miss his point, Abū Rā'iṭa uses the same qur'ānic term for "partner," *sharīk*. On the other hand, the Qur'ān also speaks of something "from God" in a context of special interest to Christians. Q 4:171 exhorts the *ahl al-kitāb* not to be excessive in their religion, and to say only that "the Messiah Jesus, the Son of Mary, was a Messenger of God and His Word, which He cast into Mary, and a Spirit from Him." The critical phrase is the last one—Jesus is a "Spirit from Him" (روح منه). This verse is the basis for the Muslim teaching of Jesus' virginal conception and the high esteem accorded him in Muslim piety. Christians such as Abū Rā'iṭa, however, argued that the virginal conception signified much more, it is proof that Jesus the Messiah is truly God.

To illustrate this point, Abū Rā'iṭa proceeds in his argument with a further distinction. Since it is agreed that the attributes of living, knowing and wise cannot be the result of some act of God, they must be from the Divine *ousia* (جوهر).[60] In this case, there are only two possibilities—"Either [they are] something perfect from something perfect, or [they are] parts from something perfect" (§16).[61] Since God is above being made up of parts, these attributes must be something perfect from something perfect. Abū Rā'iṭa once again offers several alternatives from which his listener may choose. Either the attributes of life, knowledge and wisdom are 1) divided from one another and dissimilar, and

59 Keating, *Defending*, 183.

60 The term *jawhar*, a translation of *ousia*, has a long and complex history that cannot be examined here. Abū Rā'iṭa's use of the term throughout his works is somewhat inconsistent, although it is nearly always a translation of *ousia*, reflecting the early stage of philosophy in Arabic. For a more complete analysis of the term, see Richard M. Frank, "Bodies and Atoms: The Ash'arite Analysis," in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani*, ed. M.E. Marmura (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 39–53; idem, *Metaphysics of Created Being* and *Beings and Their Attributes*.

61 Keating, *Defending*, 183.

have no continuity among them, or 2) they are continuous and connected, and no dissimilarity can be detected among them, or it is the case that 3) they are connected, yet simultaneously divided (§16). He quickly rejects the first two, and lays out an extensive argument for the third option. Naturally, the opponents will raise some objections against this, since it seems that a single thing cannot be simultaneously continuous and divided. This apparent contradiction is at the heart of the disagreement with Muslims: how can the One God be at the same time three individuals, that is, three *hypostaseis* (§17–18).

It is helpful here to make some brief comments on Abū Rā'iṭa's understanding of the term *hypostasis*. Throughout his writings, he consistently uses an Arabic transliteration *uqnūm* (اقنوم) of *qnōmā* for the Syriac (ܩܢܘܡܐ), the standard rendering for ὑπόστασις. He understands a *hypostasis* to be a formal, permanent and indivisible unity, similar to an *ousia*. In his arguments concerning the Trinity, he explains that the relationship between an *ousia* and a *hypostasis* is similar to that of a whole thing (شيء عام) and one of its properties (خاصة = ἰδιότης) (§20).[62]

Because there can be more than one *hypostasis* in an *ousia*, the *hypostasis* introduces number into the *ousia*. Although there is no separation between an *ousia* and its *hypostaseis*, the *ousia* is differentiated by the *hypostaseis*. This understanding of the *hypostasis* as differentiated particular individuals leads Abū Rā'iṭa to define *uqnūm* as the equivalent of *shakhṣ*, "individual." To illustrate this, he gives the example of "humanity," which is one, but includes many individuals characterized by their peculiar properties.

It is significant that Abū Rā'iṭa rarely uses *shakhṣ* in the technical sense of *hypostasis*, instead preferring to transliterate the Syriac. While he may have chosen it to explain his meaning in Arabic because it designates something like "person," he is obviously hesitant to suggest that the divine *hypostaseis* are related to each other in the same way as the human beings in his example. To do so would imply polytheism, which he takes great care to avoid. Consequently, Abū Rā'iṭa employs a term not pre-defined in Arabic, but which would be known to his Christian readers and perhaps many educated Muslims. By doing this he opens the door to identifying the divine *hypostaseis* with the attributes acknowledged by Muslim *mutakallimūn* to be realities belonging to the divine *ousia*.

Abū Rā'iṭa was aware that Muslim *mutakallimūn* were struggling over the ontological problem created by trying to define the relationship between the

62 Keating, *Defending*, 187.

divine attributes and the divine *ousia*.[63] How is it possible for the former to be distinguished and differentiated without introducing division into God, and thus compromising the divine unity? The solution Abū Rā'iṭa proposes is in the Christian understanding of God as one *ousia* and several attributes/*hypostaseis*. He emphasizes that continuity, that is, God's unity, is to be found in the *ousia*, while dissimilarity and differentiation is restricted to the *hypostaseis*. The opponents may refuse to accept this distinction, maintaining that it is contradictory to describe a single being whose *ousia* is different from its *hypostaseis*. They will argue that this is implied in the assertion that the manner of God's unity is different from that of His division. Abū Rā'iṭa responds with the clarification that Christians do not claim that God's *ousia* exists apart from the divine *hypostaseis*. Rather the divine *ousia* is the *hypostaseis*, and the *hypostaseis* are the *ousia* (§18–20).[64]

At this point Abū Rā'iṭa draws in the fourth of Aristotle's categories noted above for describing God's unity—that of analogy (قياس). Here he gives the example of three lamps in a house. The light of each of the three lamps is identical with the other, yet their light in the house is one. Each of the three is "self-subsistent and enduring in its being" (قائم بعينه ثابت بذاته) (§18), making them three individuals whose light is one, yet whose proper mode of being (قوام ذاته) is differentiated from the others. One can see the truth of this, since when one lamp is removed from the house, its light is removed and nothing of it remains (§18).[65] This observation is followed by an extensive discussion of the proper use of analogy (قياس), along with several further analogies to illustrate his point.[66]

Abū Rā'iṭa's complex use of analogy deserves separate treatment. It is sufficient to say here that he recognizes that it is not accepted by all Muslims as a legitimate means for communicating truth about God. Nonetheless, he makes an appeal in this treatise to the authority of the *ahl al-raʾy* (أهل الرأي) (§19), likely a reference to the legalists and scholars who subscribed to the method of Abū Ḥanīfa and were known for their acceptance of reason and opinion for interpreting Sharīʿa.[67] He argues that careful use of analogies can help human beings to grasp teachings about God, who is above analogy and similarities to

63 Griffith, "Ḥabīb ibn Ḥidmah Abū Rā'iṭah," 184.

64 Keating, *Defending*, 185–189.

65 Keating, *Defending*, 185.

66 Among the analogies for the Trinity that appear in this treatise are the relationships between Adam, Eve and Abel (§19), the soul, the intellect and the faculty of speech (§25), and the sun, its light and its heat (§26).

67 Watt, *Formative Period*, 181.

created things. In order for an analogy to be effective, however, one must not press it too far and must try to understand the comparison being made with an open heart. The truth must constantly be sought by all, accepted and adhered to (§ 23–24).[68]

2 Conclusion

The "First *Risāla* 'On the Holy Trinity'" presents a substantial attempt by Abū Rā'iṭa al-Takrītī to demonstrate the rationality of Christianity, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity. By translating centuries of Christian thought thoroughly imbued with the rationalism of Hellenistic philosophy into the new idiom of Arabic, he lays the foundation for a more fruitful exchange with his Muslim counterparts. Further, his appeal to the revered ancient philosophers, especially Aristotle, eliminates many of the problems that have arisen with Muslim claims that the biblical texts have been distorted. Although the first attempts at this theological "translation project" are rough, Abū Rā'iṭa gives credence to claim that those seeking the truth with an open heart and mind will see the truth of the doctrine that God is both one and three. His work is taken up and refined over the centuries by others, forming a significant aspect of Christian Arabic apologetics.

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68 Keating, *Defending*, 191–193.

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CHAPTER 8

The Doctrine of the Incarnation in Dialogue with Islam: Four Lines of Argumentation

Thomas W. Ricks

During the eighth and ninth centuries, a new genre of theological literature appeared: Christian apologetical treatises, written in Arabic rather than Greek or Syriac, articulating Christian doctrine in conscious dialogue with the claims of Islam. Among the major figures who contributed to this new literature were Theodore Abū Qurra (ca. 750–ca. 830), the Melkite bishop of Harran; Ḥabīb ibn Khidma Abū Rā'iṭa (ca. 770–ca. 835), a teacher and apologist of the Jacobite tradition; and ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī (d. ca. 840), a controversialist who belonged to the Church of the East (traditionally but erroneously referred to in the West as the "Nestorian Church"). As Islam presented the first major post-Christian religious challenge to the doctrine of the Incarnation, its criticisms drove the aforementioned authors to examine this key doctrine from new angles, asking themselves: Was the Incarnation the only possible method of redemption for humankind? If not, what particular advantages were gained, or particular blessings secured, by the Eternal Word becoming flesh? Finally, and most pointedly in their historical circumstances, what are the theological implications of affirming the Incarnation, particularly in comparison to Islam's claim of human salvation without incarnation of the divine? When one examines carefully the defenses of the Incarnation penned by these authors, four trajectories of argument emerge as common to all of them.

The first of these four trajectories is the notion that the Incarnation brought to completion a way of acting toward humankind that God had begun much earlier in history. The authors treated here concur that the action of bringing to completion that which is begun is a divine attribute and thus it would be unfitting to the divine nature to suggest that God instigated a project that was not brought to its fulfillment. For Theodore Abū Qurra, this idea of God's bringing to perfection what He began is connected closely with the divine attribute of justice and the moral order instituted by God. In the treatise translated by John C. Lamoreaux under the title "On Our Salvation," Abū Qurra argues that the moral law, once implemented, must either have its fulfillment in humanity's obedience or in humanity's punishment, and that it would be contrary to the divine nature to give the law and then permit it to be flouted with impunity:

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"If the law were deprived of its claims … it would become void, and God, who established it, would become one who does things in vain. May He be exalted above that!"[1] In the same text, Abū Qurra envisions God the Father speaking to the Son in eternity and saying of the Incarnation, "In this way, you will have nullified the just claims of sin and the devil its sponsor and fulfilled the claims of my law *without its becoming null and void*."[2]

Slightly later in the development of this Arabic Christian apologetical literature, Abū Rā'iṭa makes a similar argument on behalf of the Incarnation but places the emphasis upon divine intent and omniscience. While positing a distinction between God's goodness in His own being and God's goodness toward creation, Abū Rā'iṭa writes:

> It [i.e., the divine goodness] caused [God] to restore His creation which sin had made shabby. And so He returned His creation to its original state, as He, may He be praised, had always known [He would do] before. The deliverance of [creation] is more excellent than the ability to assemble it together. Because of this, He did not refrain from creating it, [although He] had the knowledge of what would befall it when it committed sin and became tangled in error.[3]

Thus, in Abū Rā'iṭa's account, the restoration of the created world is a greater act than its original creation. Further, since God had always known that He would act to restore it, the raising of creation by means of the Incarnation was, in a sense, God's original purpose in creating the world. The Incarnation, then, is understood to be the essential lynchpin connecting God's beneficence, the material world, and His eternal intention to restore it to its original glory. With-

1 John C. Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 133; the Arabic text in Constantin Bacha, *Mayāmir Thāwudūrus Abī Qurra usquf Ḥarrān, aqdam ta'līf ʿarabī naṣrānī* (Beirut: Maṭbaʿat al-Fawā'id, 1904), 89: *wa-in qaṣara al-nāmūs ʿan ḥaqqihi fa-qad ṣāra fī hādhihi al-ḥāl bāṭilan wa-ṣāra Allāh alladhī waḍaʿahu ʿabathan ta'ālā ʿan dhālika*.

2 Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 132–133 (emphasis added); Bacha, *Mayāmir*, 87–88: *wa-takūn* [adopting Lamoreaux's correction] *ḥīna'idh qad abṭalta ḥujjat al-khaṭī'a wa-ḥujjat Iblīs waliyyihā wa-qaḍayta nāmūsī ḥuqūqahu wa-lam yaṣir bāṭilān wa-lā ʿabathan*.

3 Sandra Toenies Keating, *Defending the "People of Truth" in the Early Islamic Period: The Christian Apologies of Abū Rā'iṭah* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 240–241; the Arabic text: *huwa daʿāhu ilā ān yujaddid khilqatahu lammā akhlaqat-hu al-khaṭī'a, wa-aʿāda bariyyatahu ilā ḥālihā al-ūlā kasābiq ʿilmihi, lahu al-ḥamd, lam yazal, wa-takhlīṣuhu faḍl ʿalā mā rakkaba fīhi min al-istiṭāʿa, wa-li-dhālika lam yarfuḍ khalqahu idh ʿalima mā huwa ṣā'ir ilayhi bi-rtikābihi wa tawarruṭihi fī l-ḍalāla*. I have used Keating's translation, with one change: rendering *faḍl* as "more excellent" rather than simply as "more."

out the Incarnation, the unity and integrity of the divine plan would be set at naught. One may well ask in response to this argument: granted that the divine plan for creation must be brought to completion in its restoration, how does this necessitate the material specifics of the Incarnation? Could not God have still completed His eternal plan for the created order, but in some other way? Abū Rā'iṭa anticipates and treats this question in the passage immediately following the portion quoted above, and his explanation will be treated later. For now, the two important points to note are that Abū Rā'iṭa considers the creation to be "returned to its original state" not eschatologically, but simply by the fact of the Eternal Son having joined the created world to Himself by means of the Incarnation, and that this line of reasoning is congruent with Abū Qurra's argument, in that both understand the Incarnation as the completion of the divine plan.

Abū Rā'iṭa's near-contemporary ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī also argues that the Incarnation represents a completion called for by the divine nature, but unlike Abū Qurra's emphasis on divine justice, and Abū Rā'iṭa's emphasis on divine intent and omniscience, ʿAmmār places his emphasis on the Creator's kindness toward His creation. He describes the creation of humanity as essentially an act of tremendous generosity, in which God designed a manifold order of existence of which humanity is the crowning summation, having within itself the characteristics of both the physical and the spiritual orders. Having given the gift of this exceptional position in the created order to humanity, God may be expected to perfect it:

> The initiation of humanity is [the Creator's] act of gathering all His creatures, both spiritual and physical, in him [i.e., in humanity], out of His generosity towards him. … For people of sound reason must know that the Creator will complete what He has begun, until there remains nothing uncompleted. For it was out of His generosity that the Creator created him, and not out of any need for him. And it is not possible to attribute to the Creator the initiation of an act of generosity without bringing it to completion, for He is generous and not parsimonious.[4]

4 Michel Hayek, *ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī: Apologie et controverses* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1977), 64: *inna l-Khāliq, ʿazza wa-jalla, idh ibtadaʾa al-insān bi-jamʿihi jamīʿa khalāʾiqihi min al-rūḥāniyyīn wa-l-jusdāniyyīn fihi, min jūdihi ʿalayhi … fa-innahu yalzam ahl al-ʿaql an yaʿlamū anna l-Khāliq sa-yutimm mā ibtadaʾahu bihi ḥattā lā yabqā shayʾ illā faʿalahu bihi, idh kāna l-Khāliq bi-jūdihi khalaqahu, lā li-ḥājatihi ilayhi, wa-annahu lā yumkin an yunsab ilā al-Khāliq ibtadāʾ niʿma lā yutimmuhā idh kāna jawādan lā yabkhal* (Hayek's text is Arabic only; translations original to this article).

ʿAmmār goes on to argue that the completion of this act of generosity is the granting of the last perfection that humanity lacked: dominion or kingship in the spiritual order, in addition to the dominion over the physical order granted at the time of humanity's creation. Since spiritual dominion properly belongs to God alone, this final culmination of God's generosity toward humankind requires the Incarnation as the only way that spiritual kingship can devolve upon humanity:

> Because our Creator did not create us out of any need of His own, but in order to act graciously toward us out of His generosity, and to raise us up to His own nobility, nothing of greater value could be done for us, and nothing could redound to our greater honor, and the honor of all created things, brought together in us—since He had already granted us dominion in this passing world over all that was in it—than to complete this [act of generosity] by granting to us dominion in the eternal world.[5]

The second trajectory that these authors share regarding their defense of the Incarnation is the idea that the physical body of Christ, as a defined locus of God's presence, is consistent with God's way of manifesting Himself to humankind throughout the history of divine revelation. The core of the argument is that human beings are able to focus well only on those things that are clearly identified with some particular physical place or dimension. Therefore, since God is unbounded and infinite, He identified His presence with particular objects or locations out of kindness, so that human beings could know Him better.

In developing his argument along these lines, Theodore Abū Qurra focuses primarily on the image of God sitting upon a throne: "This is [why] He made Himself a throne and sat on it in heaven … not because He needed a throne on which to sit but because they needed [to understand] the place of His dwelling, that they might worship … and that He might give them commands from it."[6] Abū Qurra follows this claim with a short catena of scriptural references to the image of God sitting upon a throne, drawing from 1 Kings, Isaiah,

5 Hayek, *ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī*, 69: *inna Khāliqanā idh lam yakhluqnā li-ḥājatihi bal li-yunʿima ʿalaynā bi-jūdihi wa-yuṣayyiranā ilā karāmatihi fa-lā shayʾ aʿẓam qadran ʿindanā wa-lā ablagh fī tashrīfinā wa-tashrīf jamīʿ khalāʾiqihi allatī jumiʿat fīnā idh jaʿala lanā al-sulṭān fī ʿālam al-fanāʾ ʿalā man fīhi min an yutimma dhālika bi-an yajʿala lanā al-sulṭān fī ʿālam al-baqāʾ.*

6 Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 136; Bacha, *Mayāmir*, 181: *jaʿala lahu ʿarshan yajlisu ʿalayhi fī l-samāʾ … laysa li-ḥājatihi ilā ʿarsh yataʿallā ʿalayhi wa-lākin li-ḥājatihim ilā maʿrifat maḥallat qarārihi li-yakūnū yasjudūna lahu fīhi wa-li-yūʿiza ilayhim bi-umūrihi minhu.*

Daniel, the Psalter, and the Song of the Three Young Men. Out of all the possible examples of God identifying a particular place with His presence in the Old Testament, Abū Qurra uses the throne undoubtedly because of its prominence in the Qur'ān. As has been demonstrated elsewhere,[7] the throne is used in the Qur'ānic text as the ultimate symbol of God's authority and is used to convey His absolute uniqueness and transcendence in sūras 9, 10, 23, 32, 43, and 57. Thus Abū Qurra draws upon both the prophetic sources that are supposedly the common heritage of both Muslims and Christians, as well as upon the Qur'ān itself, to demonstrate that God has identified Himself with a particular object, and the physical parameters associated with that object, in order to provide a focal point for the minds and hearts of those who would worship and obey Him.

Abū Qurra goes on to make explicit his parallel between the image of God's throne as the locus of God's presence and the Incarnation. In both cases, God remains unbounded, infinite, and without physical limitation, and in both cases, He acts not out of any need of His own, but out of His mercy and kindness toward humankind:

> Similarly, we know that the eternal Son is in every place, and that He is limited by nothing, and nothing contains Him, and that He need not reside [in any particular] place .... He resided in [the body] out of mercy, and this became for us analogous to the throne in heaven.[8]

He then makes explicit the heretofore implied contention that, by affirming the image of God's sitting upon a throne, but denying the Incarnation, his Muslim interlocutors are being inconsistent: "How do those who disagree with us deny that [God resides] in a body that He took from [the pure Virgin Mary], [while they say] that God sits on a throne?"[9] Furthermore, he suggests that in denying the Incarnation, Muslims are not merely being inconsistent, but are by implication affirming an incoherent doctrine—namely, that God is willing to

7 Thomas W. Ricks, *Early Arabic Christian Contributions to Trinitarian Theology: The Development of the Doctrine of the Trinity in an Islamic Milieu* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 41–48.

8 Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 137; Bacha, *Mayāmir*, 182: *ka-dhālika naḥnu na'rifu anna al-Ibn al-azalī huwa fī kull mawḍi' wa-lā nihāya lahu wa-lā yaḥwīhi shay' wa-lā yaḥtāj ilā l-ḥulūl fī mawḍi' min al-mawāḍi' ... wa-li-ajl dhālika ḥalla fīhi bi-raḥmatihi wa-ṣāra lanā hādhā l-jasad bi-manzilat al-'arsh fī l-samā'*.

9 Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 137; Bacha, *Mayāmir*, 183: *fa-mā bāl al-mukhālifīna lanā yunkirūn li-llāh al-ḥulūl fī l-jasad al-ma'khūdh min Maryam al-'adhrā' al-muṭahhara wa-hum yaqūlūn inna llāh jalasa 'alā al-'arsh.*

identify Himself with that which is lower in creation (a mere object) but that He balks at identifying Himself with that which is the pinnacle of the created order (humanity). He points out the high view of humanity's place in creation which Muslims and Christians share, together with the conclusion that if God were going to identify Himself with a particular physical locus, the Incarnation was actually the most appropriate way for Him to do so: "Indeed, both you and we say that God did not create anything more honorable than the human being. … Because of its precedence, this human creation was a fitter place for God to reside than the whole of creation."[10]

Abū Rā'iṭa also makes use of the scriptural image of God's throne, but builds his argument in a somewhat different way. He begins by attributing to his Muslim interlocutors an objection to the Incarnation based in the idea that one cannot simultaneously hold that the Eternal Word is unbounded *and* that it was somehow contained in a human body. Articulating the allegedly incoherent position that results, Abū Rā'iṭa states the Muslim position in this way: "If you acknowledge that the Word was incarnated in its entirety,[11] and the Word is in everyone, the body, therefore, is in every[one], so that nothing of the Word remains that is not incarnated."[12] In other words, if the Word is unbounded and present in all of creation, and yet radically identified with the human body of Christ, this would seem to imply that the human body of Christ is likewise unbounded and present in all of creation. In this context, Abū Rā'iṭa raises the Qur'ānic use of "Heaven" and "the throne" as the locus of God's presence, pointing out that the same difficulty arises with terminology that the Muslims affirm.

As is typical of Abū Rā'iṭa's writings compared to Abū Qurra's, Abū Rā'iṭa's argument takes a somewhat more strictly philosophical approach, due to the circumstances prevailing in the intellectual milieu of the slightly later date of his career.[13] In this case, rather than calling upon scriptural references from the

10 Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 137; Bacha, *Mayāmir*, 183: *bal taqūl anta wa-naqūl naḥnu inna llāh lam yakhluq khalqan akram ʿalayhi min al-insān … bal hādhā l-khalq al-insī awlā bihi an yaḥilla bihi llāh min kull al-khalq*.

11 I.e., as opposed to the position that a "part" of the Word was incarnated, a position that Abū Rā'iṭa dismisses as untenable because "the Word cannot be described as a 'part' or a 'whole.' … The part is related to the whole and the whole is related to the parts, but God is exalted above both predications." See Keating, *Defending the "People of Truth,"* 256–257: *al-kalima lā tūṣaf bi-baʿḍ wa-lā kamāl … al-baʿḍ muḍāf ilā l-kamāl wa-l-kamāl muḍāf ilā al-abʿāḍ wa-llāh muʿtalī ʿan kull al-ṣifatayn*.

12 Keating, *Defending the "People of Truth,"* 256–257: *fa-in qālū: fa-idhā qarartum anna l-kalima tajassadat bi-kamālihā wa-l-kalima fī kull aḥad fa-l-jasad idhan fī kull li-kay-lā yabqā min al-kalima shay' lam yatajassad*.

13 For a more complete contextualization of the way that the development of Arab Aristotelianism in the early ninth century affected the apologetical methods of both Abū Rā'iṭa

prophets, as did Abū Qurra, he makes a passing reference to the Muslim affirmation that God is both "in Heaven" and "on the throne," and then applies a purely logical argument. First, he points out that Muslims must either speak of God in terms of parts, with one part of Him being on the throne, one part of Him being in the rest of Heaven, and yet another part of Him being everywhere else, or else abandon the argument made above that the Word's unboundedness, together with the doctrine of the Incarnation, would imply the omnipresence of the human body of Christ:

> When you describe Him as being in heaven and on the Throne, it is necessary for you to describe heaven as being in everything, too, so that nothing of Him remains that is not in heaven and on the Throne, following your statement about the Word and its body. So you should know that even if the Word was incarnated in its entirety, it is [still] in everything. Thus, we are not compelled to describe the body as being in everything.[14]

Abū Rā'iṭa anticipates that a Muslim may assert that the terminology of God being "in Heaven" and "on the throne" should be taken simply as assertions of His dominion; i.e., that He is "in Heaven" in the sense of being "the Lord of Heaven." In response, he continues his logical argument by saying that there are only three ways to describe a relationship using the preposition "in" (*fī*): that God is either in Heaven and on the Throne "without being contained by anything of them, because of His exaltedness over them,"[15] or else by being entirely contained by them, or else one may deny He is in them at all. Since the latter two are not tenable descriptions for a Muslim, Abū Rā'iṭa insists that the first must be applied both to God's being in Heaven and on the Throne, and to the Incarnation. As with God's presence on the throne, the Eternal Word must be understood as having been in Christ in a unique relation that means He was neither bounded by Christ's physical body nor absent from the rest of creation.

ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī employs an argument on this same trajectory but emphasizes with even more detail that this principle—i.e., God's identification of

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and ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, see Ricks, *Early Arabic Christian Contributions*, 8–10, 113–131, and 140–151.

14 Keating, *Defending the "People of Truth,"* 258–259: *fa-idh waṣaftumūhu fī l-samāʾ wa-ʿalā al-ʿarsh wajaba ʿalaykum an taṣifū l-samāʾ fī kull ayḍan li-kay-lā yabqā minhu shayʾ laysa huwa fī l-samāʾ wa-ʿalā l-ʿarsh ka-naḥw qawlikum fī l-kalima wa-jasadihā li-taʿlamū anna l-kalima wa-in tajassadat bi-kamālihā fa-hiya fī kull lam nuḍṭarr an naṣif al-jasad fī kull.*

15 Keating, *Defending the "People of Truth,"* 258–259: *min ghayr an yaḥwiyahu shayʾ minhumā li-ʿtilāʾihi ʿalayhā.*

Himself with a particular physical locus—is a key principle within Islam. He points out that the Torah—ostensibly common source material to both Christians and Muslims—teaches that God addressed Adam, Abel, Cain, Noah, and Abraham in visible and auditory ways because of the benefit to human beings of experiencing Him with their senses. He then argues that this was also the reason, a bit later in revelation history, for the establishment of the Temple: even though human beings can worship God anywhere, it was helpful for them (and therefore, an act of kindness on God's part) to have one place in which there were tangible things associated with worship:

> Because God … knew that our knowledge of Him does not stand firm in our minds. … He spoke to Adam, to Abel, to Cain, to Noah, and to Abraham, according to the Torah, in the manner of a human being. … He spoke to Moses from the bush, as those who disagree with us affirm. … Then He commanded the sons of Israel, later on, to build a house of stone and [to make] an ark of wood so that He could be present in it, and speak to them from it, and receive their sacrificial oblations … so that their perceptions, their thoughts, their acts of worshipping Him, and their entreaties of Him could be directed to one place, as if He were contained in it.[16]

ʿAmmār then brings the argument close to the actual experience of his Muslim interlocutors, by asserting that the *qibla* is itself an example of God's acting in this same way. ʿAmmār establishes a direct parallel between the Temple of the Old Testament as the locus of God's presence, and the establishment of the *qibla* as the focal point for the Muslims' prayer. He then concludes his argument in a way similar to Abū Rāʾiṭa, suggesting that the Incarnation is both a continuation of this way of God's interaction with human beings, and also a more fitting locus than any of the others previously used:

> Since His appearances to them began in the likeness of human beings, but without actual bodies, and a bush, and a wooden ark, and other such things, which, according to Him, are inferior to them, it is to be under-

16 Hayek, *ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī*, 65–66: *wa-li-anna llāh … ʿalima annahu lā tathbut maʿrifatunā bihi fī anfusinā … kallama Ādam wa-Hābīl wa-Qābīl wa-Nūḥ wa-Ibrāhīm ʿalā mā ḥakat al-Tawrāh, ka-l-insān. … wa-kallama Mūsā min al-shajara, ka-mā yuqirru l-mukhālifūn … thumma amara banī Isrāʾīl baʿda dhālika bi-bināʾ bayt min ḥijāra wa-tābūt min khashab li-yaḥilla fīhi wa-yukallimahum minhu wa-yataqabbala dhabāʾiḥahum … li-taqṣida abṣāruhum wa-fikaruhum wa-ʿibādatuhum iyyāhu wa-taḍarruʿuhum ilayhi ilā makān wāḥid ka-annahu maḥwī fīhi.*

> stood that He would do the same in a genuine body of their kind, which is more honorable for Him, and by which they are more exalted.[17]

The third trajectory along which these authors make their defenses of the Incarnation is what we might call in the modern West a quasi-Anselmian soteriology, in which they argue that it was most fitting that humanity participate in its own salvation. In the case of Theodore Abū Qurra, this argument is closely tied to the first trajectory presented above, in which God brings to completion what He has begun. Specifically, according to Abū Qurra, God gave the moral law expecting and requiring absolute, whole-hearted obedience in all things. When the human being falls short of this standard by sinning, the only thing that he has to offer on his own behalf is penance, which cannot bridge the chasm created by his disobedience. Thus, for human beings to enjoy salvation, it is necessary that there be some way for the Law to be fulfilled. In Abū Qurra's understanding, the Incarnation alone could accomplish this fulfillment:

> [The Son] went forth into the world and allowed Himself to experience the punishment that each of us merited because of our sins, namely, being beaten, being humiliated, being crucified, and experiencing death. If He had not become incarnate, there would have been no way for Him to experience such pains, for in His divine essence He is [not] … affected by suffering, pain, or harm.[18]

Abū Qurra imaginatively places in the mouth of God the Father the explanation of why this suffering can be salvific for all of humanity:

> You, my pure Son, are my equal and share my essence. Not even the whole of humanity could be your equal or could be compared to you in any way because of the incomparable glory of your divinity. Thus, when you have suffered for their sakes just once the punishment merited by them an

17 Hayek, *ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī*, 68: *wa-innahu idh ibtadaʾahum bi-l-ẓuhūr lahum fī ṣuwar al-ins bi-lā ajsād ṣaḥīḥa wa-shajara wa-tābūt khashab wa-ghayr dhālika mimmā huwa dūnahum ʿindahu fuhima bi-an yafʿal dhālika fī jasad minhum ṣaḥīḥ huwa akram ʿalayhi wa-sharafuhum bihi akthar*.

18 Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 131; Bacha, *Mayāmir*, 86: *fa-kharaja ilā l-ʿālam mutaʿarriḍan an taḥilla bihi l-ʿuqūba allatī kāna kull wāḥid minnā istawjabahā bi-khaṭīʾat nafsihi min al-ḍarb wa-l-faḍīḥa wa-l-ṣalb wa-l-qatl, li-annahu law lam yatajassad la-mā kāna li-hādhihi al-awjāʿ sabīl an taṣila ilayhi li-annahu fī jawharihi al-ilāhī … lā yuṣilu ilayhi alam wa-lā wajaʿ wa lā adhan*.

> innumerable number of times, you will have caused the law to receive in full its claims on them and infinitely more as well.[19]

In sum, no mere human could offer anything sufficient to atone for his own sins, let alone the sins of all of humanity, and the unincarnated Son could not have borne their deserved punishments. But the Incarnate Son could both suffer on their behalf and offer an oblation greater than human guilt.

Abū Rā'iṭa, on the other hand, seems aware of the danger that this argument will be taken to imply a limitation on God's power. He therefore imagines his Muslim interlocutor asking whether God could not have saved humanity apart from the Incarnation. Rooting his response in a theological principle that would appeal to Muslims readers—namely, the absolute supremacy of the will of God—Abū Rā'iṭa explains that God could have brought about human salvation in any way that He willed, but that He in fact willed to do so in a way that required humanity's participation. By doing so, God saved humankind in a way that created the possibility of human reward:

> He did not will that their salvation and deliverance would be an act from Him alone without them, in order not to deprive them of the reward from following Him, because the reward and recompense comes to [the ones who do] the work [earning] the reward, not the work of others on their behalf.[20]

In other words, God saved humanity in a way that showed the greatest kindness toward them. He made it possible for human beings, radically identified with Christ via the Incarnation, to be rewarded because salvation became a human accomplishment as well as a divine act.

In the case of ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, his understanding of why it was appropriate for humanity to participate in its own salvation is connected closely with his fascinating anthropology. Early in his treatise *Kitāb al-burhān*, ʿAmmār presents

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19 Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 133; Bacha, *Mayāmir*, 88: *li-annaka, ayyuhā al-Ibn al-ṭāhir* [accepting Lamoreaux's correction], *ʿidlī wa-min jawharī, wa-laysa l-khalq kulluhum bi-l-yaqīn yaʿdilūnaka aw yuqāsūna bika fī ḥāl min al-ḥālāt li-jalāl lāhūtika alladhī lā shayʾ yaqrabu ilayhi, fa-idhā aṣābatka l-ʿuqūba al-mustawjibuhā kull wāḥid minhum mirāran lā tuḥṣā marra wāḥida fī shāʾnihim fa-qad qaḍayta l-nāmūs ʿanhum ḥaqqahu kullahu wa-zidta mā lā nihāya lahu*.

20 Keating, *Defending the "People of Truth,"* 240–241: *wa-lākin lam yurid ān yakūn khalāṣuhum wa-inqādhuhum fiʿlan minhu waḥdahu dūnahum li-kay-lā yaḥrimahum al-thawāb ʿalā mutābaʿatihim iyyāhu, li-anna al-thawāb wa-l-jazāʾ ʿalā fiʿl al-thawāb lā ʿalā fiʿl ghayrihim bihim*.

an understanding of the human being as a kind of "summation" of the entire created order. He explains that God created two orders of beings, the visible and the invisible, and then within each order created three classes of creatures: the inanimate, the living but non-speaking, and those who are both living and speaking. The human being contains within himself all these categories, as well as the properties of all the four elements, thereby becoming the representative of the entire created order:

> And [the human person] became the compilation of all created things, and there were joined together in humanity the two categories of "spiritual things" and "corporeal things." And the power of the four disparate elements from which the world was established were found in him, in order to demonstrate, by the union in him of disparate and contradictory things, notwithstanding their disparities, that their Creator is One, and [that He] gathered them into one thing, which He united from all of them. So if there is an expression of honor toward an individual person, all created things participate in it, since the individual is the compilation of them all, and something great is bestowed on him: He has acquired for him two great things, the first being the earth, and the other, Heaven.[21]

So, in a sense, by the Incarnation, God has involved the entire created order in its own redemption. The salvation wrought in this way is not simply the salvation of individual human beings, but the redemption of the entire created universe. Admittedly, this understanding goes beyond the moral and forensic dimension of Abū Qurra's explanation and the similar views of later Western figures such as St. Anselm. But the core principle is the same: God could have saved humanity in any way that He willed, but He willed to make redemption a human as well as divine act, in order more perfectly to express justice and restore the created order to its original state of relationship with Himself.

The fourth trajectory of argument in the Incarnational theology of the authors treated here is the notion that the Incarnation more perfectly accom-

21 Hayek, *ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī*, 63: *wa-ṣāra jāmiʿan li-jamīʿ al-khalāʾiq wa-kāna yajmaʿuhā ṣinfāni mimmā yurā rūḥāniyyūn wa-jusdāniyyūn, wa-kānat quwā al-arkān al-arbaʿ al-mukhtalifāt allatī bihā qāma l-ʿālam mawjūda fīhi, li-yadulla bi-jtimāʿ jamīʿ al-ashyāʾ al-mukhtalifāt al-mutaḍāddāt fīhi ʿalā anna Khāliqahā ʿalā ikhtilāfihā wāḥid, jamaʿahā fī shayʾ wāḥid allafahu min jamīʿihā, wa-yakūnu kullamā akrama bihi fardan fa-qad adkhala fī dhālika khalqahu jamīʿan, idh huwa jāmiʿ lahum kumalāʾ, fa-yanāluhu shayʾ ʿaẓīm, ka-mā iqtanā lahu ithnayn ʿaẓīmayn aḥaduh⟨um⟩ā al-arḍ wa-l-ākhar al-samāʾ.*

plished human salvation because the Agent of salvation was made manifest to humanity. Theodore Abū Qurra imagines a state in which humanity is saved without any clear manifestation of God according to their senses, with the result that those who are saved are perpetually frustrated in their desire to know God:

> Notwithstanding that God is uncontained, uncircumscribed, and without limit, [He willed] … to appear to His creatures, by [manifesting His deeds and words to them] from a place appropriate for them. It was His kindness and beneficence that led Him to do this for them. Indeed, if He had not done so, their minds would have been distracted ⟨in seeking a fixed place of His presence⟩ as they seek Him, and they would have had neither peace nor repose.[22]

The Incarnation, then, in Abū Qurra's view, provides a way for humanity not only to be saved, but also to fix their attention and their gratitude upon their Savior, because the mode of salvation also makes Him better known to them.

Abū Rā'iṭa takes a very similar view and argues that a mode of salvation that did not include the Incarnation would limit humanity's ability to give proper thanks to the One who delivered them:

> [W]hom should [human beings] thank for their salvation if this had been obscure to them? For it is one of two things: either they would not thank their Savior because of their ignorance, then they would be ungrateful for the grace, or they would thank one whom they did not know, and they would not be commended for their thankfulness.[23]

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22 Lamoreaux, *Theodore Abū Qurrah*, 135; Bacha, *Mayāmir*, 180–181: *inna llāh ghayr maḥwī wa-lā maḥdūd wa-lā nihāya lahu lākinnahu shā'a, tabāraka, an yaẓhura li-khalqihi min ḥaythu annahu aḥabba an yuẓhira lahum af'ālahu wa-kalāmahu min al-mawḍi' alladhī yaṣluḥu lahum, wa-hādhā minhu ni'ma 'alayhim wa-manfa'a lahum li-annahu law lam yaf'al dhālika bihim la-sahat 'uqūluhum ⟨fī ṭalab maḥallat qarārihi⟩ ibtighā'an lahu wa-la-mā kāna lahum hudū' wa-lā qarār*. In the standard text of Abū Qurra produced by Constantin Bacha, there is a lacuna where the angular brackets appear above. The Arabic is Bacha's proposed supplement, with which Lamoreaux disagrees. The English translation that appears above is Lamoreaux's, with my addition in angular brackets, accepting as legitimate the textual supplement by Bacha.

23 Keating, *Defending the "People of Truth,"* 250–251: *fa-li-man kānū yashkurūna 'alā khalāṣihim idhā ishtakala dhālika 'alayhim, fa-aḥad al-amrayn: immā lā yashkurūna li-mukhallisihim li-jahlihim fa-yakūnū kafara bi-l-ni'ma, wa-immā an yashkurū man lā ya'rifūhu wa-lā yuḥmadū 'alā shukrihim*.

Thus, in Abū Rāʾiṭa's view, the Incarnation not only redounds to greater satisfaction for those who are saved, because they are able more closely to know their Savior; it actually redounds to greater worship of God as well, because human beings are able more adequately to offer Him their thanks and praise.

ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī argues that the Incarnation fulfills a deep human need that the Creator Himself placed in the human heart: to know and comprehend that which was previously unknown. Indeed, the attainment of knowledge and understanding of what was hidden from view is one of the most satisfying of human experiences:

> There is nothing more lovable to a human being, nothing more delightful to him, and nothing more pleasurable to his mind, than to attain to the comprehension of things in their entirety, to the point that nothing is hidden from him. … Just as the yearning of Moses, the son of ʿImrān, the prophet, was such that he asked his Lord to make Himself seen to him, and just as many of those who disagree with us say that they will see God on the Day of Resurrection.[24]

Thus ʿAmmār cleverly accomplishes three things in this short passage. First, he implies that without the Incarnation one of the most basic human needs would go unfulfilled, implying a lack of kindness on behalf of the Creator. Second, he points out that no less a figure than Moses, a major prophet according to both Christians and Muslims, demonstrated that it is natural and even commendable to desire a clearer understanding of God, by means of a direct self-revelation of the divine. Finally, he somewhat slyly points out that his Muslim interlocutors profess a longing for something that is unavailable to them prior to the final judgment, but which is available in the Incarnation.

The observations offered here are, of course, but a brief introduction to the theological explorations of the Incarnation penned by Abū Qurra, Abū Rāʾiṭa, and ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī. But the convergence of these authors' thought on the four lines of argument discussed represents a significant development in Christian reflection on the meaning of the Incarnation. In sum, these authors' common assertions are: that the Incarnation brought to completion a pattern of divine action discernible throughout history, was consistent with God's gracious provision of a physical locus of His presence at key moments in His interaction

24 Hayek, *ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī*, 67: *laysa shayʾ aḥabb ilā l-insān wa-lā aqarr li-ʿaynihi wa-lā asarr li-nafsihi min darkihi al-ashyāʾ kullahā ḥattā lā yakhfā ʿalayhi shayʾ minhā … ka-mā ishtāqa Mūsā ibn ʿImrān al-nabī ilā dhālika fa-saʾala Rabbahu an yuriyahu nafsahu, wa ka-mā yaqūlu kathīr mimman yukhālifunā innahum yarawna llāh yawm al-qiyāma.*

with humanity, fittingly made possible human participation in the attainment of salvation, and more perfectly accomplished human salvation by making the Agent of salvation manifest, thus inspiring more authentic gratitude on the part of the redeemed.

Moreover, these four lines of argument reflect the authors' focused engagement with the theological claims of Islam. The first two lines of argument seek to explore common theological ground with Islam and demonstrate that the Incarnation actually represents the fulfillment of theological principles that Muslims also affirm. Since one must admit that God always brings to completion whatever He begins, and that it would be a derogation of the divine glory to have any part of the divine plan brought to naught, then if one can demonstrate that the Incarnation represents such a completion, one must admit at least that the Incarnation is not theologically incoherent. Similarly, if one can demonstrate that God consistently shows His beneficence by permitting to humankind a physical locus of His presence as an aid to their worship, then one may conclude that, at a minimum, the Incarnation is not an abhorrent departure from God's previous ways of interacting with the created order.

The third and fourth lines of argument go beyond this seeking common ground to a (generally implicit) critique of Islamic soteriology. If the Incarnation more perfectly satisfies the demands of divine justice, and even expresses more perfectly the Creator's kindness, by making human participation one aspect of the Redemption, then what can one say about a method of salvation that involves no such satisfaction of justice or expression of divine benevolence? From this point of view, Islam's insistence on the forgiveness of sins without human atonement may be understood as falling short of the expression of perfect justice, and as failing to secure a basis for human reward. Similarly, if the Incarnation makes it possible for human beings to be more genuinely thankful, and to offer God more perfect praise and thanksgiving for their redemption, what can be said about a method of salvation that leaves God inaccessible to humankind? The implied criticism is that Islam does the opposite of what it claims to do: that it leaves humankind offering thanks to a god they do not know, instead of the One who has made Himself known to them.

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CHAPTER 9

Muslim Views of the Cross as a Symbol of the Christian Faith

Shawqi Talia

إهداء إلى الأب الجليل والعلامة الكبير سدني جريفيث

ܡܠܦܢܐ ܪ̈ܒܐ ܕܥܝܠ ܢܦܝܫ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܦܠܚܘܬܐ

Within the broad field of Christian-Muslim encounter and apologetics, one of the most contentious issues has been Muslim Christology and the Muslim theological interpretation of the meaning of the Cross. The Cross is the foundation of Christianity. The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ are the symbol of Christ's role in bringing salvation to man, who is born with original sin. To reject the Cross, as Islam does, is to reject the salvific role of Christ in the redemption of man.

The starting point for the Muslim view of the Cross is that Islam does not accept it as the foundational symbol of Christian faith. The Islamic view, articulated by Muḥammad and later echoed by the Muslim community, whether "clerical" or "lay," is that the Cross is an idol (*wathan*), which, therefore, should not be displayed in public, whether on the outside wall of a church, or carried aloft in a procession, or worn on a person's body. This Islamic conception of the Cross, however, has seen various interpretations and applications, as we shall see below. The nexus for this Islamic interpretation of the Cross is the Qurʾānic verse (Q 4:157) that denies that Christ was crucified: They said: "We killed Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, the Apostle of God," but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but it was made to appear like him (*shubbiha lahum*).[1]

While this paper is not directly concerned with an examination and analysis of the Islamic understanding of the Crucifixion, a few general remarks on the subject are in order. To begin with, Theology of Redemption is an alien concept in Islam. The Christian theology of the "Fallen Man," redeemed by the Crucifixion of Christ, is contrary to the teachings of Islam, as expressed by Q 4:157.

1 For an in-depth study and analysis of the theme of Crucifixion in Islam, see Todd Lawson, *The Crucifixion and the Qurʾān: A Study in the History of Muslim Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).

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Islam acknowledges that Adam disobeyed God's command and, indeed, sinned against God; however, it argues that God, in his mercy, bestowed forgiveness upon him. In doing so, God established the principle that only the individual is responsible for his own actions. This is not only a theological principle, but also a moral one. It is moral because, in the Islamic worldview, the question to be contemplated is: How and why should a person (i.e., the crucified Christ) be punished for someone else's sin? Even more so, how and why would God permit such a "substitutionary punishment"? Therefore, from the Islamic standpoint, it follows that Christ was not crucified, because God would not permit such an unjust act. Hence, if Christ was not crucified, then the nexus between him and the Cross is vitiated. Therefore, from the Islamic standpoint, the Christians are venerating and worshipping an idol.

This Islamic understanding of the Cross and the Crucifixion leaves the Christians in a most untenable position in their apologetical dialogue with Islam. Though the Christians are accepted by the Qurʾān as "People of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*), Christ's salvific role as the central foundation of the Christian faith is rejected. If the Christians were to subscribe to the Islamic view that the Cross is nothing but an idol, it would follow that the Muslims have already won the polemical battle against Christianity in defense of their own faith.

This Islamic theological and historical exegesis concerning Christology is found throughout the whole spectrum of Islamic writings: history, Qurʾān commentaries, apologetics, and religious tracts. However, the most important document in which Islam delineates and articulates its proscription of the public display of the Cross is found in the so-called "Covenant of ʿUmar." According to several Muslim historians, this covenant was written by the Christians of Syria to the Caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (the second of the Rāshidūn caliphs, r. 634–644), in the form of a legal document, in which the Christians, in order to live in "peace and tranquility" in the lands of Islam, imposed a set of rules and regulations on their own Christian communities, now residing among the Muslims.

These conditions and stipulations defined what was permitted and what was forbidden for them to do as "protected / subordinate communities," *ahl al-dhimma*. This self-imposed covenant is a long document, but here we shall cite only the preamble and the section dealing with the Cross:

> In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate. This is a letter to the servant of God ʿUmar, commander of the faithful, from the Christians of such-and-such a city. We shall not … [*a series of prohibitions follows*] … and we shall refrain from displaying crosses on our churches [in public].[2]

2 Al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā fī ṣināʿat al-inshāʾ*, 14 vols. (Cairo: al-Muʾassasa al-miṣriyya al-

Despite this, however, Islam presents us with another, quite different perception of and attitude to the Cross. This attitude demonstrates that, though officially rejecting the Cross, Islam did in fact on many occasions "accept and tolerate" public display of the Cross, and in many cases even welcomed the Cross when it was publicly displayed.

Before examining the anecdotal history of how Muḥammad, and subsequently his followers, perceived the Cross, including their reaction to when the Cross was publicly shown, we must look at the reception of the Cross in pre-Islamic (i.e., pagan) Arabia. From the historical perspective, our understanding of this topic is limited, due to the lack of any meaningful, original sources. Modern academic studies regarding the attitude of pagan Arabs to the Cross have been quite deficient. We are unsure if pagan Arabs engaged with the Christians living around them in any meaningful dialogue about what the Cross meant to the Christians. We are also uncertain about how pagan Arabs perceived the theological or religious meaning of the Cross.[3]

While this pre-Islamic view is not clearly understood, we do have a very important source that sheds some light on this vexed question of Christian-Pagan Arabian contact. This source does not come from a religious or theological text, but from a lexical one. In an intriguing passage found in the great Arabic lexicon of Ibn Manẓūr (1233–1312), in the entry on the word *wathan* (idol), we find a comment on the Cross, written in light of the discussion of the philological meaning of the word *wathan*.

Ibn Manẓūr gives the passage without telling us where and how he received this information. The entry for this word is a long one, but we shall include only the section pertinent to our discussion of the Cross in pre-Islamic Arabia. He writes as follows:

ʿāmma li-l-taʾlīf wa-l-tarjama wa-l-ṭibāʿa wa-l-nashr, 1964), vol. 13, 358. For a critical analysis of the "Covenant of ʿUmar," see Milka Levy-Rubin, "*Shurūṭ ʿUmar* and Its Alternatives: The Legal Debate on the Status of the *Dhimmīs*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 30 (2005): 170–206; Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: From Surrender to Coexistence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Milka Levy-Rubin, "*Shurūṭ ʿUmar*: From Early Harbingers to Systematic Enforcement," in *Border Crossings: Interreligious Interaction and the Exchange of Ideas in the Islamic Middle Ages*, ed. Miriam Goldstein and David M. Freidenreich (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2012), 30–43.

3 The only extant Arabic text with a detailed account of the history of the idols and gods of pre-Islamic Arabia is the book written (ca. eighth century) by Hishām ibn al-Kalbī, entitled *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*; see the Arabic text and German translation in Rosa Klinke-Rosenberger, *Das Götzenbuch: Kitâb al-Aṣnâm des Ibn al-Kalbî* (Leipzig: O. Harrassowitz, 1941).

أصل الاوثان عند العرب كل تمثال من خشبة أو حجار أو ذهب أو فضة أو نحاس أو نحوها وكانت العرب تنصبها وتعبدها وكانت النصارى نصبت الصليب وهو كالتمثال تعظمه وتعبده ولذلك سماه الاعشى وثنا وقال:

تطوف العفاة بابوابه * كطوف النصارى ببيت الوثن

أراد بالوثن الصليب.

> In the understanding of the [ancient] Arabs, the meaning of *awthān* [pl. of *wathan*] is any statue made of wood, stone, gold, silver, bronze, or any similar [material]. The [pagan] Arabs used to erect idols and worship them. The Christians had erected the Cross, which is similar to a statue. They used to venerate and worship it. That is why al-Aʿshā[4] called it a *wathan* (idol) when he said, "The petitioners circumambulate his gates as the Christians circumambulate the shrine of the idol" [*al-wathan*]. By [the word] *al-wathan*, [al-Aʿshā] meant the Cross.[5]

This passage is crucial, not for what it says, but rather for what it may imply. If, indeed, this line of poetry is correctly attributed to the poet al-Aʿshā, who pre-dates the prophetic mission of Muḥammad and who remained a Christian throughout his life, then he was surely familiar with the Cross, with how and where it was displayed, and with its religious significance for both the Christians and the pagan Arabs. Evidently, in calling the Cross an idol (*wathan*), al-Aʿshā was only "echoing" what the pagan Arabs called it. As a Christian, he would certainly not call the foundational symbol of his Christian religion an idol.

This entry by Ibn Manẓūr raises an even more pertinent question: Did the pagan Arabs see the Cross as an idol, similar to those idols that they were venerating, or was this al-Aʿshā's personal understanding of how they saw the Cross? This point is important for an understanding of Muḥammad's attitude to the Cross. We are now faced with the question of whether Muḥammad considered the Cross an idol because he was influenced by his brethren, the pagan Arabs, and hence he simply enunciated what they were proclaiming, or his conviction about the Cross was based solely on the various Qurʾānic verses revealed

4 The pre-Islamic poet Maymūn ibn Qays al-Aʿshā (ca. 570–ca. 625) was a Christian and remained a Christian even after the coming of Islam. On his life and poetry, see Werner Caskel, "al-Aʿshā," in *EI2*, 1:689–690.

5 Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, 20 vols. (Būlāq: al-Maṭbaʿa al-kubrā al-mīriyya, 1883–1890), vol. 17, 334.

to him, which implied that since Christ was not crucified, the Cross was nothing more than an idol, which the Christians took to venerating and, in doing so, compromised the unity of God.

In the absence of convincing evidence, we can only say that it is *possible* that Muḥammad's attitude was not based solely on the Qurʾān (e.g., Q 4:157), but also stemmed from his motivation to draw the pagan Arabs into his new community. This possibility is based on the fact that since he himself rejected their idols and called for their destruction, he could not, at the same time, have made an exception for the Cross, which the pagan Arabs, most likely, regarded as an idol, assuming al-Aʿshā's poetic line is authentic and true.

An important historical source which sheds some light on Muḥammad's early attitude to idols is found in the history of the "conquest of Mecca" (also called "the Great Conquest," *al-fatḥ al-aʿẓam*) by the Muslims on 11 December 629:

> فلما ظهر رسول الله (صلّى الله عليه وسلّم) يوم فتح مكة، دخل المسجد، والأصنام منصوبة حول الكعبة. فجعل يطعن بِسِيَة قوسه في عيونها ووجوهها ويقول: ﴿جاء الحق وزهق الباطل إن الباطل كان زهوقًا﴾. ثم أمر بها فكفئت على وجوهها. ثم أخرجت من المسجد فحرقت.
>
> When the messenger of God, peace and blessing be upon him, gained victory on the day of the conquest of Mecca, he entered the mosque. [At that time] idols stood around the Kaʿba. He began striking their eyes and faces with the curved end of his bow, while saying, "Truth has come and Falsehood has perished, for Falsehood is bound to perish" [Q 17:81]. Then he commanded and they were turned on their faces, taken out of the mosque, and burned.[6]

Sources dealing with Muslim reception and understanding of the Cross fall into two basic categories. The first is the Qurʾān and Ḥadīth. The second is all the other various writings, religious or secular. The Ḥadīth is perhaps the most authoritative source in what it says about the Islamic attitude vis-à-vis the Cross. The earliest reference we have concerning the theological position of the prophet Muḥammad is found in a number of ḥadīths attributed to him.

For example, we hear that Muḥammad's position about the Cross was that it is an idol (*wathan*). According to a well-known ḥadīth:

6 Klinke-Rosenberger, *Das Götzenbuch*, 19–20.

حدثنا الحسين بن يزيد الكوفي، حدثنا عبد السلام بن حرب، عن غطيف بن أعين، عن مصعب بن سعد، عن عدي بن حاتم، قال: "أتيت النبي (صلّى الله عليه وسلّم) وفي عنقي صليب من ذهب. فقال: يا عدي، اطرح عنك هذا الوثن".

Al-Ḥusayn ibn Yazīd al-Kūfī reported from ʿAbd al-Salām ibn Ḥarb, on the authority of Ghuṭayf ibn Aʿyan, on the authority of Muṣʿab ibn Saʿd, who reported from ʿAdī ibn Ḥātim, who said: "I came to the prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, wearing a cross of gold around my neck. He said to me: "Adī, remove this idol from you [i.e., from your neck]'."[7]

In the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, we find the following ḥadīth:

حدثنا موسى بن اسماعيل، حدثنا أبان، حدثنا يحيى، حدثنا عمران بن حطان، عن عائشة (رضي الله عنها) أن رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) كان لا يترك في بيته شيئًا فيه تصليب إلا قضبه.

Mūsā ibn Ismāʿīl reported from Abbān, on the authority of Yaḥyā, on the authority of ʿImrān ibn Ḥaṭṭān, that ʿĀ'isha, may God be pleased with her, related to him, that the prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, never left anything in his house which had [images of] the Cross upon it, but that he broke it.[8]

Not only did the prophet consider any representation of the Cross to be an idol, but he also regarded any gesture that was somehow symbolic of the Cross to be forbidden, since it was an allusion to the Cross, and hence a mark of an idol. In another ḥadīth we are informed as follows:

حدثنا هنّاد بن السري، عن وكيع، عن سعيد بن زياد، عن زياد بن صبيح الحنفي، قال: "صليت إلى جنب ابن عمر فوضعت يدي على خاصرتي فلما صلى قال: هذا الصلب في الصلاة، وكان رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وسلم) ينهي عنه."

Hannād ibn al-Sirrī reported on the authority of Wakīʿ, on the authority of Saʿīd ibn Ziyād, on the authority of Ziyād ibn Ṣubayḥ al-Ḥanafī, who said:

7 Al-Tirmidhī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, 13 vols. (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-miṣriyya bi-l-Azhar, 1931–1934), vol. 2, 238–239; cf. also Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, vol. 17, 334. ʿAdī ibn Ḥātim was a Christian convert to Islam; he was a son of the famous pre-Islamic poet Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī, said to have been a Christian (d. 578).

8 Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 4 vols. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-saʿāda, 1950), vol. 4, 101.

> "I was praying by the side of Ibn 'Umar, and put my hand on my waist. When he finished praying, he said [to me]: 'This [gesture] is a cross in prayer; the messenger of God, peace and blessing be upon him, used to forbid [doing] it'."[9]

While most of the ḥadīth sayings of Muḥammad about the Cross deal with his attitude and reaction to its public display or to gestures symbolic of it, there are many that deal with Islamic concepts and interpretation of eschatology, a topic that is the subject of much Islamic medieval writing. There are many variants to this theme, and they all discuss the second coming of Christ and his reaction to the Cross, all interpreted in light of the Muslim conception of eschatology. The essential theme is that Christ will return, will kill the Dajjāl (the Muslim anti-Christ),[10] and will lead everyone in Islamic prayer. This is how the Cross appears in Islamic eschatological doctrine:

> عن أبي هريرة، عن النبي (صلى الله عليه وسلم) قال: "لا تقوم الساعة حتى ينزل عيسى ابن مريم حكمًا مقسطًا واماما عدلًا فيكسر الصليب ويقتل الخنزير ويضع الجزية ويفيض المال حتى لا يقبله أحد".

> On the authority of Abū Hurayra, who reported that the messenger of God, peace and blessing be upon him, said: "The Hour[11] shall not commence until 'Īsā ibn Maryam [Jesus, son of Mary] returns as a just judge and a fair ruler. He shall break the Cross, kill the swine, and abolish the *jizya*.[12] Wealth will be so abundant that no one will accept it."[13]

By inserting the story of Christ's second coming, during which, among other things that Christ shall accomplish, he is supposed to break the Cross, this ḥadīth defends Muḥammad's position that the Cross is an idol. By having Christ break the Cross, this ḥadīth makes the strongest possible statement of what Islam thinks of this Christian symbol. The power of this ḥadīth (whether it is authentic or not) is that here we see Christ, whose crucifixion is rejected by Islam, "denouncing" his own symbol, by breaking it.[14]

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9 Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, vol. 1, 328.

10 For the discussion of the Dajjāl, see Armand Abel, "al-Dadjdjāl," in *EI2*, 2:76–77.

11 The "Hour" is a term denoting the end of the world.

12 The poll tax imposed on non-Muslims in Muslim-governed societies.

13 Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1953), vol. 1, 1363.

14 For a discussion of the second coming of Christ as interpreted in Islamic writings, see Georges C. Anawati, "'Īsā," in *EI2*, 4:81–86.

Muslim apologetics and polemics against the Christians often presented the Cross not only as an idol but coupled it with the explanation that the Cross stands for polytheism (*shirk*). This kind of polemical rhetoric was used very early on in the development of anti-Christian apologetics. In a long, anonymous Muslim apology, probably written during the ʿAbbāsid period, we find the following statement concerning the Cross:

> وأنتم تعظّمون الصليب والصورة وتقبّلونها وتسجدون لها وهي ممّا صنع الناس بأيديهم وليست تسمع ولا تبصر ولا تضرّ ولا تنفع وأعظمها عندكم ما صُنع بالذهب والفضّة وكذلك فعل قوم إ برهيم بصورهم وأوثانهم.
>
> You venerate the Cross and the icon (*ṣūra*); indeed, you kiss them and bow down in worship before them, even though they are the work of man. They neither see nor hear; they can do neither harm nor benefit. For you, the greatest of them are those made of gold and silver; so did the people of Abraham with their images and idols.[15]

To buttress his polemical argument, the writer adds an admonition from Muḥammad, which says:

> ونهاهم عن إشراك الأوثان ... وأمرنا أن نعبد الله وحده لا نشرك به شيئًا ولا نجعل معه إلاهًا ولا نعبد شمسًا ولا قمرًا ولا أوثانًا ولا صليباً ولا صورةً.
>
> He forbade them from engaging in the polytheism of idols ... and he decreed for us to worship God alone, not to attribute a partner to him and not to accept other gods alongside him. He also commanded us not to worship the sun, or the moon, or idols, or the cross, or an icon.[16]

However, there were many occasions when the discussion between a Christian and a Muslim was intellectual and based on mutual respect and admiration between the two interlocutors. The most famous dialogue of this kind is that

15 Dominique Sourdel, "Un pamphlet musulman anonyme d'époque ʿabbāside contre les chrétiens," *Revue des études islamiques* 34 (1966): 1–33, here 29 (the English translation is my own). On the relationship between this "pamphlet" and the so-called "Leo-ʿUmar correspondence," see Cecilia Palombo, "The 'Correspondence' of Leo III and ʿUmar II: Traces of an Early Christian Arabic Apologetic Work," *Millennium* 12.1 (2015): 231–264.

16 Sourdel, "Un pamphlet," 32–33.

between the caliph al-Mahdī (r. 775–785) and the patriarch of the Church of the East Timothy I (patriarch 780–823), held in 782–783.

> And our victorious King said to me: "Why do you worship the Cross?" And I replied: "First because it is the cause of life." And our glorious King said to me: "A cross is not the cause of life but rather of death." And I replied to him: "The cross, is as you say, O King, the cause of death; but death is also the cause of resurrection, and resurrection is the cause of life and immortality … and this is the reason why through it, as a symbol of life and immortality, we worship one and indivisible God. It is through it that God opened to us the source of life and immortality, and God who at the beginning ordered light to come out of darkness, who sweetened bitter water in bitter wood, who through the sight of a deadly serpent granted life to the children of Israel—handed to us the fruit of life from the wood of the Cross, and caused rays of immortality to shine upon us from the branches of the Cross."[17]

Historically speaking, the Muslim reception and interpretation of the Cross, among lay people, educated élites, and theologians, was not a monolithic one, nor does it adhere to the strict Muslim edicts concerning the Cross. While the prophet Muḥammad was the first Muslim to proscribe public display of the Cross, history shows that, in spite of these official strictures, there were, on various occasions, a "benign acceptance" and toleration of public display of the Cross, whether on a person's body, or on the outside wall of a church, or during a religious procession. One sees evidence of such an acceptance both among leaders of the Muslim community and among ordinary Muslims.

However, while history has preserved many stories of this "different" reception of the Cross, we cannot be sure as to the reason why some Muslims followed a path different than the official attitude. Perhaps this has to do with who it was who exhibited the Cross and where it was exhibited. Possibly, the Muslim individual in question did not share the perception that the Cross was an idol, or perhaps he was enthralled by a cross that was made of gold or silver or was bejeweled. In order to obtain a fuller picture of how some Muslims viewed the Cross, it is instructive to consider some historical anecdotes. At the top of the list of Muslim individuals who showed acceptance of the Cross stand

17 Alphonse Mingana, "The Apology of Timothy the Patriarch before the Caliph al-Mahdī," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 12 (1928): 137–298, here 174–175; reprint: *Woodbrooke Studies* 2 (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1928), 1–162, here 39–40.

some Muslim caliphs. Here are two examples of such a positive reception. The first concerns the caliph al-Maʾmūn (r. 813–833):

أخبرني محمد، قال: حدثنا حماد، قال: حدثني أحمد بن صدقة، قال: دخلت على المأمون في يوم السعانين، وبين يديه عشرون وصيفة، جلبًا روميات مزنّرات، قد تزينَّ بالديباج الرومي، وعلّقن في أعناقهنّ صلبان الذهب، وفي أيديهنّ الخوص والزيتون، فقال لي المأمون: "ويلك، يا أحمد! قد قلتُ في هؤلاء أبياتًا، فغنّني فيها" ... وأمر بأن يُنثَر على الجواري ثلاثة آلاف دينار ... ونُثِرَت الثلاثة الآلاف عليهنّ.

Muḥammad reported to me, on the authority of Ḥammād, on the authority of Aḥmad ibn Ṣadaqa, who said: On Palm Sunday, I entered in the presence of [the caliph] al-Maʾmūn, and there were with him twenty imported Greek female slaves. They were wearing belts, donned Byzantine silk brocade, and were wearing golden crosses around their necks and carrying palm leaves and olives. Al-Maʾmūn said to me: "My goodness, Aḥmad, I have composed several lines of poetry about them; please sing them for me" ... Afterwards, he ordered that three thousand dinars be scattered over them ..., and three thousand dinars were scattered over them.[18]

The second, truly remarkable story deals with the caliph al-Mahdī:

وذكر عليّ بن محمد انه سمع اباه يقول: دخل المهديّ بعض دوره يومًا فاذا جارية له نصرانية واذا جيبها واسع وقد انكشف عما بين ثديّيها واذا صليب من ذهب معلق في ذلك الموضع، فاستحسنه فمدّ يده اليه فجذبه فاخذه، فولْوَلت على الصليب فقال المهديّ في ذلك:

يومَ نازعتُها الصليب فقالت * ويح نفسي أَمَا تُحِلُّ الصليبا.

ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad related that he heard from his father, who said that [the caliph] al-Mahdī entered one of his houses one day, where there was a Christian slave of his, and her bosom was wide [open] and the cleavage between her breasts was showing, and there appeared a cross made of gold suspended in that place. He found it beautiful, so he stretched his hand towards it, pulled it, and took it. She cried over the cross, to which

18 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 24 vols. (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-miṣriyya al-ʿāmma li-l-kitāb, 1970–1974), vol. 22, 213–214.

> al-Mahdī replied: "On the day when I contended for the cross with her, she said, 'Woe to my soul, do you not consider the cross permissible?'"[19]

How does one explain these two anecdotes? Two caliphs, who are, ostensibly, leaders of the Muslim community, publicly show full acceptance of displaying the Cross. Moreover, this takes place at the caliph's court. Al-Maʾmūn delights in twenty girls, each wearing a Cross around her neck. Al-Mahdī is so enchanted by the Cross that he takes it in his hand. It is evident that there were many Muslims, such as these two caliphs, who saw nothing wrong about displaying the Cross publicly, notwithstanding the proscription against doing so. The reason for such an accepting attitude is not provided; nor is it explained by historians. The fact that al-Mahdī found the Cross enticing and took it in his hand shows that when it came to the Cross he could go against the tenets of his Muslim faith. The only possible explanation for such an action is that many Muslims had a different perspective on, and shared a positive attitude to, the Cross, including even the caliph himself, though he was the chief defender of Islamic principles and injunctions.

Islamic history knows other stories that show a forbearing spirit when it comes to displaying the Cross. There are anecdotes in which, despite Muslim strictures against the Cross, we are presented with a situation in which a Muslim acts and reacts with deference and understanding towards those who violate this proscription. In a well-known anecdote that deals with the life of al-Ḥārith ibn ʿAbdallāh, a foster brother of the poet ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa,[20] we are told:

> His [i.e., al-Ḥārith's] mother passed away, having kept her Christianity secret from him. Noble men came to attend her funeral, this having taken place during the caliphate of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, may God have mercy upon him. Al-Ḥārith heard a commotion among the women, so he asked as to the reason for this. He was told that she died a Christian, and that a cross was found on her neck, which she had kept a secret. So he came out to the people [attending the funeral] and said: "Please depart from her, may God have mercy on you, for she has a religious community, which is

19 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, 15 vols. (Leiden 1879–1901), vol. 3.1, 542 (cf. English trans.: Hugh Kennedy, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Volume 29 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 262).

20 ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa (644–714) is a doyen of Arabic love poetry. On his life, see James E. Montgomery, "ʿUmar (b. ʿAbd Allāh) b. Abī Rabīʿa," in *EI2*, 10:822–823.

> better suited to [take care of] her [funeral] than you and I." The people liked what they heard and were amazed by what he did.[21]

While there were many caliphs who followed and enforced the formal proscription on the exhibition of the Cross, there were also some who not only delighted in its presence, but even provided for its display and public procession through the city, where Christians and Muslims alike could see it during a particular festal celebration. One of the documented historic stories, recounted by a Christian, is that of the Seljuq sultan Kilij Arsalān (r. 1092–1107),[22] who conveyed his wish to patriarch Michael the Syrian that the patriarch should enter the city of Melitene to meet the sultan in the following manner:

> Early in the morning the sultan himself came out to meet us with a large contingent of his soldiers and people of the city. He had sent messengers ahead of him, telling us: "The sultan has ordered that our entrance should be according to the Christian law, that is, with the Crosses and the Gospel. The Christians took many candles and put Crosses upon the lances. They raised their voices in hymns and prayers. When the sultan met my unworthiness, he asked me not to dismount. He did not allow me to take his hand, but embraced my unworthiness with his arms. When I began speaking with him, through a translator, he listened to me with pleasure. Seeing that he was listening gladly, I prolonged my discourse using many demonstrations from Scripture and nature; I also incorporated an exhortation [that affected him] so much that his tears came down from his eyes … All the Christians praised and thanked [the Lord] when they saw the Cross lifted high above the sultan and the attending Muslims."[23]

Even though Muslim apologetics about the Cross was defined by its religious and theological dimensions, Muslim perspectives show up also in a different literary genre, used particularly by poets. In Arabic poetry, the Cross does not appear for apologetic or polemical purposes, but simply as a way of adding a description to the character wearing a cross or to the place in which it is displayed. In these poetic lines, the Cross is only a testimonial to the fact that it

21 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 1, 67.

22 During the First Crusade, Kilij Arsalān defeated the army of Peter the Hermit in 1101.

23 Jean-Baptiste Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jacobite d'Antioche* (*1166–1199*), 4 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899–1910), vol. 3, 390–391 (French trans.) / vol. 4, 725 (Syriac text).

is a Christian symbol. The authors make no effort, and have no intention, to engage in a theological dialogue. Moreover, such descriptive allusions to the Cross indicate that the poets were, certainly, enamored with the sight of the Cross, especially when a given poet incorporates this image in many of his poetic lines. The most famous author to have done this is the great poet Abū Nuwās.[24]

The Cross plays an important role in Abū Nuwās' famous anthology of homoerotic poetry. In this anthology he describes his beloved, but conjoins many religious motifs, using such words as "Christianity," "Cross," "bishop," "church," "altar," "Injīl" (Gospel), and others. His aim is to show the object of his attention that he values his Christian faith and its many symbols, with the hope that his positive acknowledgment of Christianity will elicit a positive response. However one may interpret the poet's intention, these lines depict a Muslim who is not embarrassed or afraid to invoke these Christian symbols, yet presents them without engaging in either apology or critique of the Christian faith. Even more salient is the fact that these "beloved" Christian boys were wearing the Cross publicly, in any fashion they considered appropriate, and without any apprehension or fear of Muslim reaction.

The following lines are taken from several of Abū Nuwās' short poems. Only pertinent lines are cited and translated.

بروح القدس

قل لذي الطَّرْف الخلوب ولذي الوجه الغضوب ...
فبروح القدس عيسى وبتعظيم الصليب
قف إذا جئت إلينا ثم سَلِّمْ يا حبيبي!

By the Holy Spirit
Tell him who has enchanting eyes and hot-tempered demeanor ...
In the name of the Holy Spirit, ʿĪsā, and the veneration of the Cross,
Stay [for a while] when you pass by, then give us a greeting, O my beloved![25]

24 Abū Nuwās (756–814) is a doyen of Bacchic Arabic poetry. He was the boon companion of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (r. 786–809).

25 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Miṣr, 1953), 355.

بدر السماء

عَلِقْتُ من شِقْوَتِي ومن نكدي مزنَّرًا والصليبُ في عُنُقِهْ
أقبلَ يمشي إلى كنيسته فكدتُ أقضي الحياةَ من فَرِقِهْ
فقلتُ: مَنْ أنتَ بالمسيح وبالْـ إنجيل، سَطَرْتُهُ على وَرَقِهْ
وبالصليب الذي تدينُ له فقال: بدر السماء في أفقه
سألتُهُ عن محلّ بيعته ...

The Full Moon of Heaven

I was suspended in misery and difficulty by one wearing a sash, and the Cross on his neck.
He came walking to his church, but I almost died when he departed
On a piece of paper I wrote: who are you, in the name of Christ and the Injīl (Gospel),
and in the name of the Cross, which you venerate? He answered: I am the full moon of heaven on the horizon.
So I asked him about the location of his church.[26]

العابد المعبود

بسجود القسّيس يومَ السجود والصليبِ المعظَّمِ المعمودِ
والأناجيلِ والمزاميرِ والمِسْـ ـراجِ في كفّ عابدٍ معبودِ
وبناقوسِ بيعة اللحم حقًّا وبأقفالها وبالإقليدِ

The Worshipped Worshipper

[I swear] by the prostration of the priest on the day of adoration, and by the Cross, venerated and lifted on a standard!
[I swear] by the Gospels and the Psalms, and by the lantern in the hand of a worshipped worshipper!
[I swear] by the semantron[27] of the Church of Bethlehem,[28] by its keys and lock.[29]

26 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, 366.
27 The semantron (*nāqūs*) is a wooden board used in Christian practice to call worshippers to prayer.
28 The Church of the Nativity.
29 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, 370.

يا ليتني
مزنّرٌ يتمشّى نَحْوَ بيعته إلهُه الإ بنُ فيما قال والصُّلُبُ
يا ليتني القَسُّ أو مطرانُ بيعته أو ليتني عنده الإنجيلُ والكُتُبُ

Wish That I Was
Wearing a sash, he is walking to his church. His God is the Son, as he declared, and the Cross.
I wish that I was the priest or the bishop of his church, or that I was for him the Gospel and the [holy] books.[30]

While Islam officially proscribed public display of the Cross, Christians continued to show the Cross and parade it in the streets and by rivers, especially on certain celebratory feasts, such as Palm Sunday and Epiphany. We know that these celebrations took place because they have been duly recounted by both Christians and Muslims. In the history of the eleventh-century Melkite scholar Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Anṭākī, we find the following passage:

> It was the custom of the Christians of Jerusalem that every year they would carry a large olive tree on Palm Sunday from the Church called al-ʿĀzariyya to the Church of the Resurrection,[31] which were at a large distance from one another. The Christians would parade this [olive tree] through the streets of the city, with recitation and prayers, carrying the Cross publicly.[32]

We also have this historical testimony:

> It was customary for the Melkites, especially on this night,[33] to depart from the Cathedral church, situated in Qaṣr al-Shamʿ and known as St.

30 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, 333. For an analysis of this poem, see James E. Montgomery, "For the Love of a Christian Boy: A Song by Abū Nuwās," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 27 (1996): 115–124; see also Elizabeth K. Fowden, "The Lamp and the Wine Flask: Early Muslim Interest in Christian Monasticism," in *Islamic Crosspollination: Interactions in the Medieval Middle East*, ed. Anna Akasoy, James E. Montgomery, and Peter E. Pormann (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007), 1–28, here 16–17.

31 I.e., from the Church of St. Lazarus in Bethany east of Jerusalem to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

32 Ignatius Kratchkovsky and Alexandre Vasiliev (ed. and trans.), *Histoire de Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd d'Antioche, continuateur de Saʿīd-ibn-Bitriq*, Fascicle II, Patrologia Orientalis 23.3 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1932), 487 [279].

33 The Feast of Epiphany.

> Michael's Church, with a large throng, chanting beautiful hymns in a loud voice, with Crosses in open display and many lit candles. They would go to the shore of the Nile singing hymns and praying in a loud voice all the way there. The bishop in charge of them would give a sermon in Arabic and pray for the king and whomever else he wished of his retinue. Then they would return to their Church in the same manner and would complete their prayers in it. On many a year [the caliph] al-Ḥākim attended in disguise and witnessed [the procession]. On this feast all the citizens of Cairo and all the representatives of the various religions and sects were filled with such joy and jubilation as they never experience during the other days and feasts of the year.[34]

Yet history also tells us that sometimes, unexpectedly, the same caliph would command that all such celebrations be canceled, under threat of severe punishment. The historian Yaḥyā al-Anṭākī, who informs us about the joyous public festal celebrations, also reports how these same celebrations were forbidden by order of the Fāṭimid caliph al-Ḥākim (r. 996–1021):

> This year, however,[35] al-Ḥākim forbade [the Christians] of Jerusalem from observing their traditions [i.e., the Palm Sunday procession mentioned earlier] and ordered that none of these celebrations would take place in the kingdom.[36]

De Lacy O'Leary gives us details of these prohibitions by al-Ḥākim:

> The Khalif issued orders forbidding the Christians to observe the "Feast of Baptism," i.e., the Epiphany, on the banks of the Nile, and prohibited the games and amusements which usually accompanies the celebration of that feast. He also forbade the observance of the "Feast of Hosannas," i.e., Palm Sunday, and the Feast of the Cross in the autumn. At that time it was customary for Muslims and even the Khalifs themselves, to take part in the public festivities with which the Christians celebrated their greater festivals.[37]

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34 Kratchkovsky and Vasiliev, *Histoire de Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd*, 493–494 [285–286].

35 398 AH, corresponding to 17 September 1007–4 September 1008.

36 Kratchkovsky and Vasiliev, *Histoire de Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd*, 487 [279].

37 De Lacy O'Leary, *A Short History of the Fatimid Caliphate* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1923), 159. On the reign of al-Ḥākim and his persecution of non-Muslims (including the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem), see Paul

During the ʿAbbāsid period, the caliph who ordered the most severe persecution of the Christians was the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847–861):

> In this year al-Mutawakkil ordered the *ahl al-dhimma* to wear a yellow *ṭaylasān*[38] … and he commanded the destruction of the newly built churches. He forbade them from using the cross in their Palm Sunday celebration or to have it displayed in the streets.[39] He also ordered to install on their [outside] doors wooden replicas of the Shayṭān (Devil).[40]

To conclude: this paper has attempted to present the history of Muslim attitudes to the Cross, theological, historical, and Christological. The Muslim understanding of the Cross has its nexus in the Qur'ān (Q 4:157), was enunciated by Muḥammad, and saw its formal application by the Muslim community soon after his death. However, throughout their long history as "People of the Book" under Islamic rule, the Christians also experienced another, considerably more lenient Muslim perspective. This divergence in interpreting the Cross is characteristic of Islamic history.

How is it that this official Muslim legal prohibition against the display of the Cross became circumscribed? This latitude can best be understood through the fact that Islam did not always try to draw a theological nexus between the Cross and the Crucifixion. To judge from the many historical anecdotes given above, there were many Muslims who did not regard the Cross as an idol and did not consider it in a theological light. Rather, they saw it as a symbol of a religious community that engaged in wearing or displaying the Cross as part of their Christian character. To many Muslims, the Cross was but one of the many symbols of one's Christian faith; hence, they often treated it with deference, and at times with acceptance. No doubt, some were moved by the sight of the Cross used in a joyful festal celebration, in which Christians and Mus-

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E. Walker, *Caliph of Cairo: Al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh, 996–1021* (Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2009); Thomas Pratsch, ed., *Konflikt und Bewältigung: Die Zerstörung der Grabeskirche zu Jerusalem im Jahre 1009* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011); Maciej Czyż, "al-Ḥākim's Persecution of Christians," *Parole de l'Orient* 39 (2014): 203–219; Paul E. Walker, "al-Ḥākim and the Dhimmīs," *Medieval Encounters* 21.4–5 (2015): 345–363.

38 Shawl-like garment worn over the head and shoulders.

39 This prohibition was enacted in 235 AH, corresponding to 26 July 849–14 July 850.

40 Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿIbar wa-dīwān al-mubtadaʾ wa-l-khabar*, 7 vols. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Būlāq, 1867), vol. 3, 98; cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, vol. 3.3, 1389–1390 (English trans.: Joel L. Kraemer, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, Volume 34 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 89–90).

lims often participated jointly. Others were quite accustomed to the Cross, due to their deep familiarity with Christianity and personal interest in individuals wearing it. No better example can be given than Abū Nuwās, whose life seemed to have evolved around a "tavern," which was run by Christians, and who would frequently visit monasteries for various reasons. A person such as Abū Nuwās had no reason to think of the Cross as a theological object; nor did he see it as an idol.

Finally, perhaps a more favorable explanation could be given. With the presence of sizeable Christian communities living among the Muslims, the latter came to recognize the deep Christian veneration of the Cross as a token of the Christians' devotion to their faith. The fact that so many Christians would wear the Cross publicly and without fear further contributed to the Muslim community's coming to accept and tolerate public display of the Cross. The above analysis of the anecdotal history makes clear that the official Muslim proscription lost much of its legal force in the early Islamic period and in subsequent centuries. Islam came to recognize the Cross as a symbol of a religious community united in its commitment to its Christian faith; hence, for Muslims, the theological implications of the Cross became secondary, while accepting it in practice became a *modus vivendi*.

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CHAPTER 10

The Doctrine of the Trinity in Early Islam: Misperceptions and Misrepresentations

David Thomas

In the early centuries of the Islamic Empire, when the land had been secured under Muslim rule, there were few real signs that non-Muslim subjects fared very differently from Muslims. There were taxes to pay, and other requirements such as having to yield way to Muslims in the street or to give lodging to Muslim travellers. But apart from these irritations most people appear to have got on with their lives much as they had done before the advent of Islam.

The lives of Christian professionals and religious leaders appear to have suffered little from the fact that they mixed closely with Muslims: John of Damascus (d. 749), a senior figure in the Umayyad court, retained his faith through the years he worked for the caliph and gives no sign in his writings of having experienced undue discrimination; the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I (d. 823) appears to have enjoyed free access to the ʿAbbāsid court, and in his celebrated debate with al-Mahdī (r. 775–785) he met the caliph's questions with polished answers delivered with confidence and calm; even the Nestorian medical expert ʿAlī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. 870), who eventually converted to Islam, gives no hint of excessive pressure upon him through decades of service as secretary under a Muslim governor and a succession of ʿAbbāsid caliphs—he is more likely to have become a Muslim for his own personal reasons of dissatisfaction with Christianity than pointed pressure from outside.[1] The picture of Christians under Muslim rule in the early Islamic centuries of Islam may not be satisfactorily recovered (and Sidney Griffith has done more in his magisterial works than anyone else to piece it together), though such evidence as survives indicates that it was far from sombre, and it may have been largely uneventful.

If Muslims had anything to complain about to Christians, it was because of their beliefs. From the Muslim point of view, derived from the Qurʾān, Christians were the inheritors of the revelation given through the prophet Jesus, which would have imparted the same teachings as the revelations given to all the prophets, and surpassingly to Muḥammad, about the emphatic oneness

1 See Rifaat Ebied and David Thomas, eds., *The Polemical Works of ʿAlī al-Ṭabarī* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 17–24.

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of God. The Qur'ān hints at obfuscations of this pure teaching in Christians' elevation of Jesus to equality of God as his Son and even of placing Jesus and Mary besides God as divinities, and it also condemns their error of worshipping three gods. From the earliest records it is clear that differences over the status of Jesus and the consequential belief in more than one God preoccupied Muslims above everything else when they thought of Jesus. It could even be surmised that nearly all the discussions conducted among Muslim theologians in the years following the ʿAbbāsid dynasty's rise to power were, at least in part, spurred by the desire to distinguish the Islamic perception of God from what appeared to be lax and inexact portrayals among the churches that continued to function in Muslim society.

The great majority of works that are known to have been written specifically on the topic of *tawḥīd* by such theological masters as Abū l-Hudhayl, the leader of the Baṣra school of the Muʿtazila, have been lost, but since many of the same theologians are known to have written refutations of Christianity, among other faiths, it is at least likely that they framed part of their arguments about their own perception of a God who was radically one in his essence and completely different from any other being in the light of alternative versions of godhead, among them the Trinity.

One early surviving refutation of Christianity affords a sharp insight into Muslim attitudes towards the Trinity. The *Radd ʿalā l-Naṣārā* was composed by the Zaydī Imām al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Rassī, and it can be dated to the first years of the ninth century, before 826, making it the earliest extant Muslim polemic against Christian doctrines.[2] It has an incisiveness that sets it apart from many other works like it, and it appears to be based on knowledge of contemporary Christian theology as embodied in works of the Melkite bishop and theologian Theodore Abū Qurra,[3] who was active at the same time as al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm was writing.

As part of his arguments, al-Qāsim analyses and rejects the doctrine as it has been presented to him. According to this, he says, God is three separate beings (*ashkhāṣ muftarika*) who are one consolidated nature (*ṭabīʿa wāḥida muttafiqa*).[4] He goes on to inquire into the status of the titles "father" and "son," asking whether these denote beings in their true nature, essence and substance, or as hypostases (*uqnūmiyya*, *shakhṣiyya*), or in contingent and accidental events (*ḥāditha*, *ʿaraḍiyya*). He argues that since Christians call God

2 Ignazio di Matteo, ed. and trans., "Confutazione contro i Cristiani dello zaydita al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 9 (1921–1922): 301–363.

3 Wilferd Madelung, "Al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm and Christian theology," *Aram* 3 (1991): 35–44.

4 di Matteo, ed., 314–316.

father because he begot a son, these names can only apply to him because of an activity, and therefore cannot apply to him in his essential, specific actuality.[5] Al-Qāsim's conclusion is that language of the three "Persons" of Trinitarian doctrine does not refer to the real being of God, but to an event in which Christians say he participated. Thus, even by the admission of Christians themselves, the "Persons" are not designations of the eternal essence of God, and fail to penetrate to the reality of his being. Whether or not Christians would reject this brief argument because it neglects to take into account the teaching that the begetting by the Father of the Son is eternal, it demands a serious reply because it threatens to overturn the Trinity as a doctrine that has no relation to God in his being.

A much longer, though equally incisive refutation of the Trinity is the *Radd ʿalā l-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā* of the Muʿtazilī turned free-thinking Shīʿī (if even that adequately sums him up) Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad ibn Hārūn al-Warrāq, who was active in the mid-ninth century. His attack is one of the longest that survives from a Muslim of any period, and it proved a prolific source of arguments for Muslims in the centuries following its composition.

Rather than condense the doctrine into an act of begetting, as al-Qāsim does, Abū ʿĪsā accepts the formulations given by the three main Christian churches in the Islamic Empire (his source or sources can no longer be traced, though if they were in written form their loss is particularly unfortunate because they must have been comprehensive in their presentation of Christian doctrines) and subjects them to the most rigorous analysis. He does this in minute detail and at great (some readers might have thought inordinate) length, showing repeatedly that the ways in which various Christian groups have worded their versions of the doctrine are either contrary to logic or internally incoherent, or else involve consequences that lead to impossible conclusions.

The impersonal character of this lengthy and unrelenting attack makes it very difficult to peer behind the surface of the words to see either Abū ʿĪsā's sources or any of the Christians he particularly has in mind, apart from the three denominations of Nestorians, Jacobites and Melkites. However, at the end of this section of the *Radd* (the other is an equally detailed refutation of the Incarnation) he turns on Christian individuals who may have been active in the same theological field as he himself and attempted to explain their doctrine in language that Muslim intellectuals could understand. His argument proceeds as follows:

5 di Matteo, ed., 318.

> If anyone among [the Christians] should claim that the hypostases are properties (*khawāṣṣ*), we question them and ask: Properties of what, of themselves or of a fourth thing other than them?[6]

The point under examination here is that any being can possess properties that endow it with particular characteristics and that can be regarded as both a part of the being, in the sense that they cannot exist in their own right but only with the essence of the being as their substrate, and also as ontologically and logically distinct from the being because they are not identical with the essence of the being. This was part of the conceptual repertoire of Muslim theologians at this time as they strove to work out the nature of contingent being.

This comparison might appear to be very fruitful, because it would seem to provide Christians active in the Arabic-speaking world of Islamic theology with a way of explaining how the Persons of the Trinity could be understood as both identical with the divine substance and also discrete existences in themselves. But Abū ʿĪsā will have none of it, and he produces a string of points to show that this borrowing will not work. His first point illustrates his almost irritable rejection of what his opponents say:

> We question them and ask: Properties of what, of themselves or of a fourth thing other than them? If [the Christians] say: Of a fourth thing other than them, they overstep the bounds of the doctrine of the Trinity and affirm a fourth.[7]

His point is that since properties must exist in a being, by analogy the three Persons must exist in an entity that is other than themselves, leading to the result that the doctrine will entail four entities rather than three. He goes on to pick hole after hole in this analogy, his brief arguments descending almost to ridicule as he makes them:

> If, as you hold, Speech is the Son and is also a property of the substance which is other than the Father, then the Son must be Son of the substance which is other than the Father, just as it is a property of the

6 Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad ibn Hārūn al-Warrāq, *Radd ʿalā l-thalāth firaq min al-Naṣārā*, ed. and trans. David Thomas, *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam, Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq's "Against the Trinity"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 172–173.

7 Abū ʿĪsā, *Radd*, 172–173.

> substance which is other than the Father, and must be Speech of the substance which is other than the Father.[8]

This impossible conclusion shows the consequence of Christians employing concepts in new contexts without seeming to understand the ramifications of what they mean. But, more significantly, it serves to show that there were Christians at this time who appeared to be borrowing ideas from Islamic theology to help them explain the doctrine of the Trinity in a Muslim milieu to people who were not persuaded by the explanations they had been accustomed to offer (a favourite among these was the analogy with the sun, whose disc, light and heat could all be perceived separately but which was still one single entity—Muslim theologians often took pleasure in exposing the inappropriateness of this) and required something more rigorous.

It can be shown (as will be seen below) that there were Arabic-speaking Christian theologians at about the time that Abū ʿĪsā was writing who rose to the challenge of expressing this allusive doctrine in new forms; he may well have had one or more of them in mind in this argument, though no names or hints emerge from his anonymous prose. And the question raised by the attempts they and their successors made is how fully they intended to satisfy their Muslim interlocutors, and thus how realistic they were in their expectations, and how serious they were in their coining of new formulations of a doctrine that to Christians remained a sublime mystery and to Muslims often seemed nothing more than a ridiculous travesty of the truth.

The first generations of known Arabic-speaking Christians who attempted to explain their faith to Muslims were active in the late eighth century, when an unknown author wrote the earliest work of this kind so far discovered, which has been given the title *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāhid*,[9] and in the first half of the ninth century as the first sustained Christian apologetic writings in Arabic were produced. From this latter generation the author whose work particularly stands out is a certain ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī who left two expositions of Christian doctrines that appear to have been written with Muslims in mind. Strictly speaking, the period of ʿAmmār's main activity cannot be pinpointed, but since one of these works alludes to an event that took place during the Muslim siege of the town of Amorion in 838, which it calls topical, and in addition the Muʿtazilī theologian Abū l-Hudhayl, who was active in the early ninth century, is known to have directed a work expressly against ʿAmmār al-Naṣrānī, it seems

8 Abū ʿĪsā, *Radd*, 172–173.

9 See Mark Swanson, "*Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid*," in *CMR*, 1:330–333.

safe to place him in the years before 850, just at about the time that Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq was writing his long diatribe.[10]

ʿAmmār's two works have the character of handbooks on Christian teaching. The earlier of them, *Kitāb al-masāʾil wa-l-ajwiba*, as its title indicates, is in fact a set of model questions that a Muslim might be expected to ask, together with appropriate answers, as though intended to equip Christians who might find themselves in conversational difficulties when the talk turned to matters of faith. The later work, *Kitāb al-burhān*, covers much of the same ground though in more expository form, laying out doctrine for Christian readers with an occasional glance towards Muslims who might want to ask about the beliefs being explained.[11] In fact, Muslims are addressed directly in the chapter on the Trinity where ʿAmmār employs ideas known from theological discussions among Muslims that are reminiscent of Abū ʿĪsā's anonymous Christians, though with more caution and circumspection than they show.

ʿAmmār's argument is essentially set out in two stages. In the first he argues that God must possess life and reason. This is because he must be living and rational, since otherwise he would be lifeless and ignorant. Here, ʿAmmār directly addresses a "believer in the oneness of God (*al-muʾmin bi-l-wāḥid*),"[12] and argues that God's qualities of being living and rational must derive from attributes of life and reason that are within his essence. ʿAmmār shows that these are foundational elements of the essence of God, and that from them the other attributes, such as power, sight and hearing, derive. In this way he is able to explain that God is Trinitarian in being, the Divinity possessing Life, or the Holy Spirit, and Word, or the Son.

There is a certain ingenious quality to this demonstration, because ʿAmmār was employing ideas that were intimately associated with debates current within Muslim theological circles at the time he was writing. One side, the Muʿtazila, denied the existence of real attributes since they threatened the strict oneness of God, preferring to say instead that God was, for example, living by virtue of his own essence rather than by an attribute of life. Their opponents argued that this was confusing because there could be no guarantee that God possessed any qualities without possessing attributes which were discrete entities from which they derived.

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10 See Mark Beaumont, "ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī," in *CMR*, 1:604–610.

11 For a discussion of the attitude shown towards Muslims in ʿAmmār's works, see Sara Husseini, *Early Christian-Muslim Debate on the Unity of God, Three Christian Scholars and Their Engagement with Islamic Thought (9th Century C.E.)* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), here 198–211.

12 Michel Hayek, *ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, theologie et controverses* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1977), 46.

There was, however, a problem in this explanation that employed terms and ideas fresh and current in Muslim discussions about the being of God. As the supporters of real attributes recognised, there was a risk of turning God into a plurality by suggesting the existence of a series of entities in addition to his essence. They hesitated to speak categorically about the independent reality of the attributes, and the best-known among them, a certain ʿAbdallāh ibn Kullāb, employed a definition that was already known from earlier times, "[The attributes] are neither God nor other than him," suggesting that while the attributes can be identified as such they are not to be understood as discrete existences. It is this understanding of *khawāṣṣ* or *ṣifāt* that Abū ʿĪsā had in mind in his arguments against the shadowy Christians who used them in comparison: since their existence cannot be defined separately from that of the being of God when they are understood in these terms, they cannot be thought of as subsisting in the way Christians said the Persons of the Trinitarian Godhead did, and therefore the comparison breaks down.

ʿAmmār himself was fully aware that the comparison between Persons of the Trinity and attributes of the divine essence had limitations. He explains in his argument that he has been doing no more than making a comparison for the sake of clarity, and he goes on to argue that of the four types of existents, namely substances (such as humankind), hypostases (such as specific individuals), powers (such as the sun's heat and light) and accidents (such as the blackness of a black object), only substances and hypostases exist independently; powers and accidents exist by virtue of the substances that support them. Thus, since it is wrong to relate incomplete and inferior entities with God, his Life and Reason must be hypostases because these are complete and independent in existence and worthy of being elements of the Godhead.

Here ʿAmmār makes clear that his employment of concepts from contemporary Muslim theological disputes is only part of his explanation of the Trinity and not a new model expressed in Islamic terms. While he recognised that Muslim attributes doctrine was helpful, it was not by any means adequate for Christian purposes, for the simple reason that in the terms understood by ʿAmmār, which are clearly Aristotelian in derivation, attributes must be accidental in nature, depending on other entities for their existence, and so entirely unsuitable in discussions about the eternal God.

His argument discloses a number of important differences between Arab Christian theology at this time and theology within Muslim circles. These differences reveal the riskiness of borrowing terms and concepts from the one to the other without making it perfectly clear that no crass parallelism is being attempted. More than that, they make explicit the different bases—

Aristotelian in ʿAmmār's case, native Arabic grammatical in the case of the Muʿtazila and their Muslim opponents—upon which the two religious traditions built their teachings, and most importantly the immense difficulty in bridging the gulf between the two different worlds of theological thought.

This latter complication was encountered by Christians throughout the early centuries of Islam when they appear to have felt themselves free enough to take on criticisms from Muslims and attempt to show that the doctrine of the Trinity could be expressed in ways that did not lead towards a plurality of Gods or a single divine Being who possessed particular modes or characteristics. The trouble was that the only way many Christians saw to offer satisfactory explanations was to employ versions of the attributes doctrine familiar to Muslims (a signal exception was the tenth century Nestorian philosopher Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, who made use of the notion of God as knowing, knowledge and known thing, and cognates, which were more indebted to Greek thinking than Muslim). Some recognised the problems in doing this, as ʿAmmār had done in the ninth century, but it appears that others, including Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq's anonymous targets, either did not or were insufficiently careful to make it clear that they were not remodelling the doctrine but only using a readily available Muslim equivalent as a comparison for the sake of clear explanation.

In the decades and centuries following ʿAmmār the problem he had envisaged recurred repeatedly. For example, with clearly polemical intentions the late ninth-century Muʿtazilī theologian Abū ʿAlī l-Jubbāʾī (d. 915–916) appears to have understood the three Persons of the Godhead in stark terms as attributes and he argued against them accordingly. The work in which he did this has only survived in the form of brief quotations and summaries, but from these it seems that he did not, or was not alerted to, appreciate any difference between attributes in the Muslim context and hypostases in the Christian context, and so he treated the Persons as though they were part of an explanation given entirely within the terms of Muslim theology. Hence,

> He compelled [the Christians] to say that [God] was living not by Life (*ḥayy lā bi-ḥayāh*), or else to say that Life is living. This is because they must say either "The living one is the Father and not the other two hypostases" or "He is the three hypostases." If they say "[The Father] is the living one," they have to accept that he is the Agent, Creator, and Divinity, and in this their teaching that the Divinity is the three hypostases is shown to be false. But if they say that the Holy One is the three hypostases so that the teaching can survive, it necessarily follows that Life is living with the Father. This is impossible, because if a cause confers a status upon some-

> thing other than itself, it is not right that it can confer this status upon itself as well as upon this other thing, just as it is not right for it to confer it upon itself alone.[13]

According to this reasoning, the hypostasis of Life cannot make the Godhead living (in the way an attribute would the being it qualified as living) without destroying the doctrine, because either the true Divinity would be the Father who was qualified as living by the hypostasis Life and the hypostasis Life would not be the Divinity, or the hypostasis Life would qualify itself as well as the other two hypostases. According to either alternative, to regard the hypostasis Life as functioning like an attribute of God turns the doctrine into a travesty.

The circumstances in which Abū ʿAlī framed these crushing arguments cannot any longer be known, but given their schematic and abstract character (even allowing for the fact that they have mainly survived in summarised form), it seems more likely that he was employing a written source than taking them from actual encounters with Christians. The same seems to be true of the two major Muslim theologians of the tenth century, the Ashʿarī Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013) and the Muʿtazilī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 1025) in their comprehensive though condensed and theoretical arguments against the Christian doctrine.[14]

The divorce from live encounters attested to by these tenth-century masters raises the question of the seriousness with which Muslims may have been trying to understand what Christians were saying (apart from Abū ʿĪsā, no Muslim from this period shows signs of having investigated Christian beliefs for themselves), and, equally important, the seriousness with which Christians tried to explain themselves. ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī had coined the comparison between the Persons of the Trinity and the attributes of *tawḥīd* doctrine as, it would appear, little more than a means of introducing those who would know about the latter to the former. He was not making any assumption that the Christian doctrine could be expressed fully in terms of the Muslim concepts. Hence, while he was opening an avenue of approach between the faiths, he did not expect either Christians or Muslims to meet in full agreement anywhere along the way. For him, the doctrine of the Trinity possessed an integrity that must be accepted in its own right, with the inference that any Muslim who wished to appreciate it, while he might be helped by imagining the Persons as attributes, would

13 David Thomas, *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 254–255.

14 See Thomas, *Christian Doctrines*, for the texts and translations of the refutations of the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation in al-Bāqillānī's *Kitāb al-tamhīd* and ʿAbd al-Jabbār's *Mughnī*.

have to abandon this notion in order to grasp that the three were separate and independently subsisting entities who were united as substance, rather than "neither God nor other than God" as the Muslim supporters of attributes said: the conceptuality and terminology of the one faith could not be translated satisfactorily into the other.

From what can be told, this ingenious comparison, though it was ultimately insufficient, remained the best attempt in the Islamic world to explain the Trinity for centuries, as though Christians were unable to find a better way to satisfy their critical opponents, or, which is more likely, were not interested in making the attempt. There was no meeting of minds or will to understand, but rather what may be thought of as a kind of haughty stand-off in which neither Christians nor Muslims considered it worth the while to expend energy in making their beliefs truly transparent to the other. Behind their different stances can be discerned a confidence in their respective perceptions of the truth, and a refusal to relax it in order to find a way to come closer together.

There would appear to be an exception to this tense intransigence in the form of a series of meetings and correspondence between the eleventh century Nestorian metropolitan Elias of Nisibis (d. 1046)[15] and Muslim officials in the region of the northern Euphrates. They repeat many of the forms of argument used by ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī two centuries earlier, and while the reports of their exchanges indicate that the bishop's explanations of the Trinity appear to have satisfied the Muslims, it is by no means certain that they really did.

Maybe the best-known of Elias' works is the account he gave of the seven meetings held in Mayyāfāriqīn between himself and Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī l-Maghribī (d. 1027), the vizier of the local Marwanid ruler. There is no solid reason to doubt that these actually took place, though since the account was written by Elias himself there is reason to question whether he has given a totally accurate version of what happened. It is in the first meeting that he is asked about the doctrine of the Trinity.[16]

According to the account, the vizier explains that he is uncertain about whether Christians are unbelievers and polytheists (*kuffār wa-mushrikūn*). He had previously been certain about this, but after he had been helped back to health in a monastery he was no longer sure. He wishes now to know more

15 See Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "Elias of Nisibis," in *CMR*, 2:727–741.

16 Ed. and trans. (French), Samir Khalil Samir, "Entretien d'Élie de Nisibe avec le vizier Ibn ʿAlī al-Maġribī sur l'Unité et la Trinité," *Islamochristiana* 5 (1979): 31–117; trans. (English) Martino Diez, "The Vizier and the Bishop Face to Face about the Trinity," *Oasis* 22 (2015): 98–112.

about the Trinity and whether it means that Christians worship three gods, and he emphasises that he has no hidden intentions.[17] With this assurance, Elias proceeds to give his explanation.

First, he says, it can be established that God subsists in himself and not by virtue of anything else. Since Christians give the name "substance" (*jawhar*) to what is self-subsistent, this is the term they use for God.[18] Then, it will be agreed that God is living, otherwise he would be lifeless, which is impossible; and rational, since he is the Creator of all rational things.[19] Thus, "We call him living in the sense that he has a Spirit (*rūḥ*) […] and similarly we call him rational in the sense that he possesses reason (*nuṭq*)."[20]

The vizier clearly realises the leap in logic here, and points out that to say "living by life, rational by reason" leads to polytheism because it associates two other eternals with God. To this Elias replies that unless God has Life and Reason he cannot be living or rational, "because there is no living being without life, or rational being without reason. […] This is because derived names are taken from entities that have existence (*min maʿānin mawjūda*)."[21] He goes on in more detail: When Christians think of God as self-subsistent, this is an indication of an entity that is different from when they think that God is rational or living, and the same for each of the three. "Thus, when we say 'self-subsistent, rational and living' this is an indication to us of three entities: Essence, Reason, and Life."[22]

Elias goes on to explain that since the essence of God does not bear accidents or composition, God's Reason and Life cannot be either of these but must be substantial, equal to the essence in substantiality and eternity.[23] According to Aristotle's *Categories*, they must either be general substances or specific hypostases, but since the Essence, Word and Spirit cannot be three accidents or three substances, they must be three specific hypostases (*aqānīm khawāṣṣ*).[24]

17 Samir, "Entretien," 50–63.

18 Samir, "Entretien," 64–65; cf. al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 144–153.

19 Samir, "Entretien," 76–79.

20 Samir, "Entretien," 82–83.

21 Samir, "Entretien," 84–85. Samir translates "tirés des concepts existents," but the sense here requires a more ontologically precise meaning of the Arabic *maʿnā*; see Richard M. Frank, "*Al-maʿnà*: Some Reflections on the Technical Meanings of the Term in the Kalām and Its Use in the Physics of Muʿammar," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 87 (1967): 248–259.

22 Samir, "Entretien," 86–87.

23 Samir, "Entretien," 88–89.

24 Samir, "Entretien," 90–91.

This appeal to Aristotle reveals the basis of Elias' argumentation,[25] though there appears to be a gap in his argument. A little earlier he has said that God's Reason and Life must be "substantial" (*jawhariyyān*),[26] while here he states without argument that they cannot be three substances, by which he presumably means that they cannot be independent substances because they are related to the divine substance through making it living and rational (this is the sense in which they are substantial). However, what may be clear to him was possibly not clear to the vizier. For when Elias goes on to say that God is one substance in three hypostases, he replies, "Your affirmation according to which God possesses a Word and a Spirit, which are two hypostases, is not rational,"[27] implying that according to his own understanding the relationship between the being of God and the Word and Spirit in Elias' explanation is analogous to the Muslim understanding of the relationship between the essence of God and the divine attributes, one in which "possession" can be talked about appropriately but which Elias has tried to avoid.[28]

What is revealing here is that while Elias does not use the term "attribute" about the Persons, which would suggest ontological subordination, he describes their functions of making the essence living and rational as though they actually were attributes. This presumably occasions the vizier's remark here, and also his final remark at the end of the meeting that Elias's explanation "contains elements that could be disputed and contested according to the view of the Muslims who reject the affirmation of attributes,"[29] a clear reference to the Muʿtazila who championed this position, and an admission that as far as he himself is concerned Elias' explanation, like ʿAmmār's, follows the lines of the Muʿtazila's opponents who promoted the reality of the attributes.

The vizier's reduction of Elias' presentation of the Trinity in this way to its distant Muslim equivalent underlines the problem Elias has inherited from ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī. This is, how to express the doctrine in terms that appear to be congenial to Muslims and how to offer an analogous model without demoting two of the divine Persons to the subsidiary status of qualifiers of the

25 Samir, "Entretien," 90, n. 45, admits that he has not been able to find any passage in the *Categories* that refers to this.

26 Samir, "Entretien," 88–89.

27 Samir, "Entretien," 92–95.

28 The only place where Elias employs the language of possession is on 82–83, § 121: "We call him rational in the sense that he possesses reason (*anna lahu nuṭqān*)." A little earlier, pp. 82–83, § 117, he alludes to the same idea when he says *kāna nuṭquhu nuṭq al-fahm wa-l-ḥikma*.

29 Samir, "Entretien," 106–107.

essence. That would be Christian heresy, though it would make the doctrine less unpalatable to Muslims, maybe, by enabling them to see it as monotheism (though there would remain the problem of restricting the number of hypostases/attributes to two).

Clearly ʿAmmār had Muslims in mind when he wrote about the Trinity—his address to *al-muʾmin bi-l-wāḥid* makes this clear—and Elias gave his explanation before a senior Muslim official,[30] but on the basis of the arguments they present one has to ask whether they did, in fact, regard the task of explanation as a true challenge and a point of urgency. To the extent ʿAmmār and Elias realised they had to respond to circumstances in which they were offering their explanations, they evidently did recognize the need to say something coherent in order to defend their faith from ridicule. But in the more profound sense of attempting to set out their own belief in terms that a follower of the other faith would grasp, they do not seem to be acutely concerned to make their explanation entirely acceptable. And their allusions to Aristotelian principles and terminology, while they were in the middle of articulating Trinitarian concepts in *kalām* frameworks of thought, gives the clue as to why.

Quite obviously, Christian theologians in the early Islamic world were the inheritors of teachings from much earlier times than the Islamic era. These teachings, and the terms in which they were articulated, possessed coherence for Christians. There was thus little cause, or possibly desire, to dismantle them in order to re-erect them in new forms according to a foreign model. In this may be found the real reason why Christians and Muslims failed to understand one another over the doctrine of the Trinity. On their side, Christians saw little reason to abandon their ways of expressing the doctrine, and they may even have regarded Muslims who failed to accept the terms in which they couched their teachings as wrong-headed and intellectually stunted. The employment of the attributes doctrine that was developed in the Islamic world from the ninth century was a concession, either explicitly, as in the case of ʿAmmār, or implicitly, as in the case of Elias, to help towards understanding of what the doctrine really contained. But that was all; few went further than this, or saw the need to. Equally on the Muslim side, there was reluctance to accept the Aristotelian thinking that Christians employed—their persistent refusal to see that the use of the term "substance" in a Christian context, where it meant self-subsistent being, differed from its use in their own theology, where it meant a

30 He gives a summary of the presentation he articulates in two later letters, *Risāla ilā l-wazīr al-kāmil Abī l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī*, the vizier who figures in this debate (dated to 1027), and *Risāla fī waḥdāniyyat al-Khāliq wa-tathlīth aqānīmihi*, written at the request of a Muslim judge in Mosul (dated to 1029).

concrete entity with physical and temporal limitations, is a vivid illustration of this. Hence the two sides continued intentionally or unintentionally to misunderstand.

While the Arabic-speaking Christians of the early Islamic era, as we have seen, made a few efforts to help Muslims comprehend their cardinal doctrine, there appears to have been a measure of intransigence on both sides, a stubborn certainty of being right where the other side was simply wrong. Thus, accusations of being associators or polytheists from the one side and implied criticisms of being unsophisticated simpletons from the other became the norm. In subsequent years these solidified into stereotypes, and not much changed as time went on.

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PART 3

Arabic Christianity in the Medieval Islamic World

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CHAPTER 11

Byzantine Monasticism and the Holy Land: Palestine in Byzantine Hagiography of the 11th and 12th Centuries

Johannes Pahlitzsch

1 Palestinian Monasticism in Byzantine Hagiography and Pilgrimage Reports of the 9th and 10th Centuries

In Byzantine hagiographic texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, primarily in the vitae of monastic founders, in comparison to the late ninth and tenth century an increasing interest in the Holy Sites of Palestine and especially in the monasteries founded by the Palestinian monastic fathers in the Judaean Desert can be discerned.[1] As Alice-Mary Talbot has shown, it cannot be assumed that after the Islamic conquest of Syria and Palestine in the seventh century Byzantine pilgrims stopped visiting the Holy Land.[2] St. Theodore Stoudites still expressed in his letters to the *hēgoumenoi* of the Monasteries of St. Sabas and St. Chariton from 818 his desire to go to the Holy Land and to visit the tombs of these two venerated founders of Palestinian monasticism.[3] Also

1 Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The Judean Desert Monasteries in the Byzantine Period* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); John Binns, *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ: The Monasteries of Palestine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 314–631. More specifically for the monastery of St. Sabas, cf. Joseph Patrich, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism: A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies 32 (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995); Andrew Jotischky, "St Sabas and the Palestinian Monastic Network," in *International Religious Networks*, ed. Jeremy Gregory and Hugh McLeod (Woodbridge: Ecclesiastical History Society; Boydell Press, 2012), 9–19. I am grateful to Zachary Chitwood and Max Ritter for their support and advice in writing this paper.

2 Alice-Mary Talbot, "Byzantine Pilgrimage to the Holy Land from the Eighth to the Fifteenth Century," in *The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present: Monastic Life, Liturgy, Theology, Literature, Art, Archaeology*, ed. Joseph Patrich (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), 97–110, with a list of pilgrims at pp. 109–110.

3 *Theodori Studitae epistulae*, ed. Georgios Fatouros (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 1992), letters 277 and 278, 2:412–415, especially 416. Talbot, "Byzantine Pilgrimage," 102. Another example for the still enduring importance of Palestinian monasticism in Byzantium at the beginning of the ninth century is provided by Michael Synkellos and his disciples, the brethren Theodoros, and Theophanes Graptos, all Sabaite monks who came in 813 to Constantinople becoming until the end of their lives actively involved in the iconoclastic controversy;

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St. Germanos of Kosinitza came according to his vita in his youth, probably in the middle of the ninth century, as a pilgrim to the Holy Land to visit the Holy Sites. Subsequently, he entered the Prodromos Monastery on the Jordan River where he stayed until he reached the age of thirty. After having had a vision in which he was ordered to found a monastery in Macedonia, he left Palestine.[4]

Afterwards however, for about the next hundred years, we find in the lives of saints who traveled to Palestine, be they founders of monasteries or not, no references to Palestinian monasteries. Thus, in the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople from the end of the tenth century[5] it is stated in the brief entries on the two saints Petros Thaumatourgos (or of Galatia) from about the middle of the ninth century and a certain Paulos from the ninth or tenth century only that they visited the Holy Sites.[6] According to the quite legendary presentation of the life of the Mozarab St. Dounale, in about 950 he went to "every Holy Site to venerate it."[7] It is true that in the *Synaxarion* the lives of saints were provided only in abbreviated form. But in the light of the increased interest in Palestinian monasticism at the time when the *Synaxarion* was composed it seems that any reference to the Judean desert monasteries made in the original versions of the lives of Petros, Paulos, and Dounale would have been included in the *Synaxarion*.[8]

The same holds true for St. Elias the Younger, who was, according to his life, in Jerusalem sometime after 878. He was not originally a pilgrim, but was captured by Muslims and lived many years as a house slave in North Africa. Only after his manumission did he go to Jerusalem. Although he travelled extensively

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cf. Lorenzo Perrone, "Monasticism in the Holy Land: From the Beginnings to the Crusaders," *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 45 (1995): 31–63, here 56; Ralph-Johannes Lilie, Claudia Ludwig, Thomas Pratsch, Beate Zielke et al., *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit* (= *PmbZ*), I. Abteilung (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 1999), Michael Synkellos: #5059, 3:285–291, Theodoros Graptos: #7526, 4:413–420, Theophanes Graptos: #8093, 4:593–598.

4 "Bios kai politeia tou hosiou patros hēmōn Germanou," in *Acta Sanctorum Maii* (Paris and Rome, 1866), 3:6*–10*, 7*. However the chronology of Germanos is quite problematic. For the discussion of the various attempts of dating, cf. *PmbZ* II (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2013), #22285, 2:522–524.

5 Andrea Luzzi, "Precisazioni sull'epoca di formazione del Sinassario di Costantinopoli," *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici* 36 (2000): 75–91; idem, "Synaxaria and the Synaxarion of Constantinople," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, ed. Stephanos Efthymiadis (Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 2:197–208.

6 For Petros cf. *Synaxarium ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae*, ed. Hippolyte Delehaye (Brussels, 1902), cols. 121–126, here 123–124 and 126: "*tous hagious topous*"; *PmbZ* II, #26426, 5:365. For Paulos, cf. *Synaxarium*, cols. 283–288, here 287–288: "*tous ekeise topous*".

7 *Synaxarium*, cols. 317–320, here 319–320: "*panta hagiōn topōn*"; *PmbZ*, II, #21610, 2:160–161.

8 For this increased interest in the Palestinian monasteries at the end of the tenth century cf. below the analysis of the Life of St. Lazaros.

in the region, the Palestinian monasteries are not mentioned in his life.[9] Also the reports of non-saintly pilgrims refer almost exclusively to the Holy Sites.[10] Thus, in one of the edifying stories of bishop Paulos of Monemvasia, who wrote in the 960s or 970s, the monk Gregory just states generally that he has the desire to go to Jerusalem to venerate the Anastasis and all the other Holy Sites there.[11]

An exception is the life of the Georgian monk St. Hilarion the Iberian, written by the end of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century in Georgian. He spent seven years around the middle of the ninth century in the Monastery of St. Sabas, living an ascetic life. But this text was obviously written for a Georgian audience and does not reflect the specific Byzantine attitude to Palestinian monasteries at this moment.[12]

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9 Rossi Taibbi, *Vita di Sant' Elia il Giovane, testo inedito con traduzione italiana pubblicato e illustrato* (Palermo: Istituto Siciliano di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici, 1962). *PmbZ* II, #21639, 2:180–186. He spent, however three years in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai.

10 To these non-hagiographical texts one could add the quite concise guidebook for pilgrims of Epiphanios Hagiopolites. Here the monasteries of St. Sabas and St. Chariton as well as others are merely listed without further comments, Herbert Donner, "Die Palästinabeschreibung des Epiphanius Monachus Hagiopolita," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 87 (1971): 42–91, here 71. Sidney Griffith, "Byzantium and the Christians in the World of Islam: Constantinople and the Church in the Holy Land in the Ninth Century," *Medieval Encounters* 3 (1997): 231–265, here 240, comes accordingly to the conclusion that Epiphanios "gives no hint of the indigenous Christian monasticism thriving there at that very time. He was interested in the Loca Sancta and not in the monastic communities of Palestine." The chronology of Epiphanios Hagiopolites is also very vague: after 717 and before 900 according to Andreas Külzer, *Peregrinatio graeca in terram sanctam: Studien zu Pilgerführern und Reisebeschreibungen über Syrien, Palästina und den Sinai aus byzantinischer und metabyzantinischer Zeit* (Frankfurt a.M. and New York: P. Lang, 1994), 16–17. Alfons Maria Schneider, "Das Itinerarium des Epiphanius Hagiopolita," *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 63 (1940): 143–154, here 154, dates him between 750 and 800; *PmbZ* II, #1577, 1:502–503.

11 *Les récits édifiants de Paul, évêque de Monembasie, et d'autres auteurs*, ed. John Wortley (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1987), no. 10/X, chap. 1, 82. Further Byzantine pilgrims to Jerusalem for the period between the middle of the ninth century and about 960 are mentioned in the sources. Thus it is reported in the Life of Loukas Steiriotes (d. 953) that around 900 in Athens, at the age of seven, he met two monks who were on their way from Rome to Jerusalem; *The Life and Miracles of Saint Luke of Steiris*, ed. Carolyn L. Connor and W. Robert Connor (Brookline, MA: Hellenic College Press, 1994), ch. 9, 16–18. I am indebted to Max Ritter for this reference. It seems that about the same time in the Trebizond area a group of old men, and on another occasion an otherwise unknown monk, had the same intention; *The Hagiographic Dossier of St Eugenios of Trebizond in Codex Athous Dionysiou 154*, ed. Jan Olof Rosenqvist (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1996), 280 and 302. Whether any of these ever reached the Holy City is not known.

12 Bernadette Martin-Hisard, "La pérégrination du moine géorgien Hilarion au IXe siècle,"

There are probably several reasons for this lack of interest in the Palestinian monasticism in this period. The political instability in the ʿAbbāsid caliphate because of the ongoing power struggles after Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 809) caused insecurity, as Theophanes describes very vividly for 812/813:

> In the same year many of the Christians of Palestine, monks and laymen, and from all of Syria arrived in Cyprus, fleeing the excessive misdeeds of the Arabs. For, as a result of the general anarchy that prevailed in Syria, Egypt, Africa, and their entire dominion, murders, rapes, adulteries, and all manner of licentious acts that are abhorred by God were committed in villages and towns by that accursed nation. In the holy city of Christ our God the venerable places of the holy Resurrection, of Golgatha, and the rest were profaned. Likewise the famous *lavras* in the desert, that of St Chariton and that of St Sabas, and the other monasteries and churches were made desolate. Some Christians were killed like martyrs, while others proceeded to Cyprus and thence to Byzantium and were given kindly hospitality by the pious emperor Michael and the most holy patriarch Nikephoros.[13]

This insecurity and the increasingly aggressive policies of the Byzantine emperors towards the ʿAbbāsids made travelling to the Holy Land more difficult.[14] Consequently, it seems that Byzantine monks who previously would have gone on a pilgrimage to Palestine and would have joined a monastery there, now sought out other destinations for their pilgrimages and further instruction in monasticism either inside the borders of the Byzantine Empire or at least beyond the areas of Muslim rule.[15]

Bedi Kartlisa 39 (1981): 120–138. For Hilarion's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, cf. ibid., 123–124; *PmbZ*, I, #2583, 2:134–136.

13 *Theophanis Chronographia*, ed. Carolus De Boor (Leipzig, 1883), 1:499 [English translation: Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, A.D. 284–813* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 683].

14 Griffith, "Byzantium," 232–244. Juan Signes Codoñer, *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842: Court and Frontier in Byzantium during the Last Phase of Iconoclasm* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

15 Cf. the examples of Gregorios Dekapolites, Nikolaos Stoudites, Euthymios the Younger, Blasios of Amorion and Loukas Stylites given in Elisabeth Malamut, *Sur la route des saints byzantins* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 1993), 247–262. Michael McCormick, *Charlemagne's Survey of the Holy Land: Wealth, Personnel, and Buildings of a Mediterranean Church between Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2011), 38–43, describes the decline of Palestinian monasticism in relation to its peak in Late Antiquity, and points to its dependence on extraregional recruitment, which became more and more diffi-

According to Sidney Griffith another fact contributed also to this, namely the development of a cultural gap between an "Arab-Orthodox" Melkite Church and the Byzantine Church, the former having found its expression in the emergence of a rich Arabic corpus of ecclesiastical literature at precisely this time.[16] Palestinian monasticism was by no means declining in the ninth or tenth centuries, but it seems that most of the monks living there were Arabic-speaking. So while Byzantine pilgrims still reached the Holy Land at this time, although most probably in smaller numbers, these Arabic-speaking "Melkite" communities seemed to have been of little interest for Byzantine visitors. Or rather, the texts reporting these pilgrimages no longer deemed them worthy of mention.[17]

In the second half of the tenth century, however, the situation changed again with the Byzantine re-conquest of Northern Syria and the establishment of the *doukaton* of Antioch in 969, which inaugurated a new phase of Byzantine influence in Syria and Palestine.[18] Regarding the Melkite Church, an intensive program of Byzantinization was initiated through various measures. So in Antioch the patriarchs were once again dependent on imperial recogni-

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cult during the eighth century because of the lasting hostility between Byzantium and the caliphate. Cf. also Max Ritter, *Die Ökonomie des byzantinischen Pilgerwesens* (*4.–12. Jahrhundert*) (Diss. Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, 2017).

16 Griffith, "Byzantium," 244, states with regard to the formation of a Melkite identity at this period that "one of the conditions which hastened this development was precisely the growing distance between Constantinople and Jerusalem in the late eighth and ninth centuries, both socially and culturally." Cf. also Sidney H. Griffith. "The Church of Jerusalem and the 'Melkites': The Making of an 'Arab Orthodox' Christian Identity in the World of Islam, 750–1050 CE," in *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdoms*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy Stroumsa (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 173–202. Also Perrone, "Monasticism," 56–57.

17 Sidney H. Griffith, "Anthony David of Baghdad, Scribe and Monk of Mar Sabas: Arabic in the Monasteries of Palestine," *Church History* 58 (1989): 7–19, here 16–19. For the emergence of Christian Arabic literature cf. Sidney Griffith, "The Monks of Palestine and the Growth of Christian Literature in Arabic," *Muslim World* 78 (1988): 1–28, here 17; Griffith, "Byzantium," 244–252. For the importance of the monasteries for the Melkite Church cf. also Hugh N. Kennedy, "The Melkite Church from the Islamic Conquest to the Crusades: Continuity and Adaptation in the Byzantine Legacy," in *The 17th International Byzantine Congress. Major Papers* (New Rochelle, NY: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1986), 325–343 [reprint: Hugh N. Kennedy, *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East* (Aldershot: Ashgate/Variorum, 2006), no. VI]. Also Perrone, "Monasticism," 53–61.

18 Klaus-Peter Todt and Bernd Andreas Vest, *Tabula imperii Byzantini* 15: Syria (Syria Prōtē, Syria Deutera, Syria Euphratēsia) (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014), pt. 1, 189–198; Klaus-Peter Todt, *Dukat und griechisch-orthodoxes Patriarchat von Antiocheia in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit* (*969–1084*) (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, forthcoming).

tion, and the Fatimid caliph seemingly accepted that the patriarch of Jerusalem was nominated from now on by the emperor.[19] Furthermore, from the end of the tenth century the Church of Constantinople strove more intensively toward the uniformity of the liturgy in the patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, including their adoption of the liturgy of John Chrysostom, customary in the capital, and the *Synaxarion* of Constantinople, which stems from this period.[20] In the field of law a similar development can be discerned. The Arabic translation of the Greek *Procheiros Nomos*, which was added to the Melkite collection of laws at the latest around 1200, might have been envisioned already in the eleventh century.[21]

In Palestine the situation of the Melkite population after 969 was largely determined by the relationship between the Fatimids and Byzantium. Generally the Melkites enjoyed a distinguished position at the Fatimid court until the persecutions of the caliph al-Ḥākim and the destruction of the Holy Sepulchre in 1009. However, these persecutions were rather short-lived and the restoration of Christian churches and monasteries was already started by al-Ḥākim himself at the end of his reign and continued under his successor. In 1035/36 a truce was concluded between the Fatimid rulers of Cairo and the Byzantine emperor which indeed could be understood as an acknowledgment of a Byzantine "protectorate" over the Orthodox Christians in the Holy Land. Furthermore the emperor was allowed to restore the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.[22]

With regard to pilgrims, the Persian traveler Nāṣir-i-Khusraw who stayed in Jerusalem in 1047 states that Christians from the Byzantine Empire and other countries regularly visited the Holy Sites. Also, according to him, in the days

19 Johannes Pahlitzsch, "Die Bestimmung von Patriarchen in der orthodoxen Kirche unter islamischer Herrschaft in Syrien und Ägypten vom 10. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert," in *Personalentscheidungen in gesellschaftlichen Schlüsselpositionen: Institutionen, Semantiken, Praktiken*, ed. Andreas Fahrmeir (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 55–73, here 57–60 for Antioch, and 64–65 for Jerusalem.

20 Daniel Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Johannes Pahlitzsch, "Greek–Syriac–Arabic: The Relationship between Liturgical and Colloquial Languages in Melkite Palestine in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *Languages and Cultures of Eastern Christianity: Greek. The Worlds of Eastern Christianity, 300–1500*, vol. 6: Greek, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Farnham, Surry and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 495–505, here 503.

21 Johannes Pahlitzsch, *Der arabische* Procheiros Nomos*: Untersuchung und Edition der arabischen Übersetzung eines byzantinischen Rechtstextes* (Frankfurt am Main: Löwenklau-Gesellschaft e.V., 2014), 31*–33*.

22 Johannes Pahlitzsch, "The Melkites in Fatimid Egypt and Syria (1021 to 1171)," *Medieval Encounters* 21 (2015): 485–515.

of al-Ḥākim even the Byzantine emperor had allegedly made the pilgrimage in disguise.[23] David Jacoby infers from this information that already at the turn of the eleventh century Byzantine pilgrimage had been a regular, large-scale movement and that after the reconstruction of the Holy Sepulchre shortly before Nāṣir-i-Khusraw's visit to Jerusalem it resumed its former scale.[24] Sulaymān al-Ghazzī, a Melkite bishop from the first half of the eleventh century, mentions Byzantine pilgrims as well and describes how the "Kings of Byzantium" (*mulūk al-Rūm*) visited and venerated the Holy Sites, maybe referring to the same story as Nāṣir-i-Khusraw.[25]

Not least due to these changed circumstances the motif of visiting the Holy Land and Palestinian monasteries regained importance in a number of lives of saintly monastic founders from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as will be demonstrated in the following. The question of the historicity of these accounts should not be dealt with.[26] Rather, the aim of this paper is to examine the way in which the Holy Land was depicted in hagiography, what functions these texts fulfilled, what conclusions can be drawn from the again increasing reference to Palestinian monasteries, and the importance the Holy Land had for Byzantine monasticism in this period.

2 Palestine in the Life of St. Lazaros

The situation in Palestine is described in detail in the vita of St. Lazaros, which was composed by his disciple Gregory the Cellarer sometime after 1057.[27] St. Lazaros' status as a holy man was based chiefly on his extraordinary perseverance as a stylite, for he spent the last forty or so years of his life on a pillar close by his monasteries which he founded on the mountain of Galesion, not far from Ephesus, between ca. 1019 and 1042. He died in 1053 and by the end of his life

23 *Nāṣer-e Khosraw's Book of Travels*, trans. Wheeler McIntosh Thackston (Albany: Bibliotheca Persica, 1986), 37–38.

24 David Jacoby, "Bishop Gunther of Bamberg: Byzantium and Christian Pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the Eleventh Century," in *Zwischen Polis, Provinz und Peripherie: Beiträge zur byzantinischen Geschichte und Kultur*, ed. Lars Martin Hoffmann (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 267–286, here 268–272.

25 Sulaymān al-Ghazzī, vol. 2: al-Dīwān al-shiʿrī, ed. Neophytos Edelby (Jounieh, 1985), 3–7; Pahlitzsch, "Melkites," 485–515; cf. also Talbot, "Byzantine Pilgrimage," 109–110, who lists thirteen pilgrims for the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

26 For a discussion of this issue, cf. Talbot, "Byzantine Pilgrimage," 97.

27 Richard P.H. Greenfield, *The Life of Lazaros of Mt. Galesion: An Eleventh-Century Pillar Saint* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000), 51–58.

he had become, according to Richard Greenfield, a "living icon and had shown his contemporaries that there was at least one man alive who was still quite capable of meeting the daunting standards of ascetic practice" which were set by the monastic fathers from the Egyptian and Judean deserts.[28]

The life records the saint's birth in a village not far from Ephesus probably in 967/68. The lost rule, the *Testament* of Lazaros, included according to Gregory an account of "how the father left his own homeland and reached the Holy Land."[29] This account was most probably Gregory's main source.[30] At the age of twelve Lazaros was sent to a neighboring monastery where his uncle was a monk. There he felt for the first time the urge to go to the Holy Land so that he attempted to run away from the monastery, however unsuccessfully. He remained at different monasteries in that area before he achieved his goal of escaping to the East at the age of eighteen. Lazaros reached Attaleia and spent the next seven years in a monastery in the vicinity, becoming a monk and taking the monastic name of Lazaros. Yet as he gathered ever more followers there due to his reputation as a holy man, he decided to continue his journey to Palestine. He finally reached Jerusalem between 991 and 993 at the age of 25 or 26.[31]

There he entered the Monastery of St. Sabas. But as the *hēgoumenos* of the monastery forbade him to spend the season of Lent in the desert, as only a few selected monks were so permitted, he was expelled "for being an idiorrhythmic and someone who would rather follow his own wishes than those of his superior."[32] He was transferred to the Monastery of St. Euthymios where he spent some time. But he did not approve of the standards of monastic life there and of the inappropriate contact with Arab women. Finally he was allowed to return to Mar Saba where he became a fully professed monk and was appointed as one of the two *kanonarchēs*, the leaders of the monastic choir.[33] It becomes clear that at this time the Monastery of St. Sabas no longer corresponded to the classic Palestinian form of a *laura* which consisted of a group of anchorites

28 Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 2; *PmbZ* II, #24285, 4:11–13.

29 "Vita S. Lazari auctore Gregorio monacho," in *Acta sanctorum novembris*, ed. Hippolyte Delehaye (Brussels: Apud Socios Bollandianos, 1910), 3:508–606, § 246, 585 [English translation: Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 350. A different translation is provided in *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments* [= *BMFD*], ed. John Thomas and Angela Constantinides Hero (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000), 1:164].

30 Talbot, "Byzantine Pilgrimage," 98.

31 Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 6–7.

32 "Vita S. Lazari," § 17, 514 (Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 97).

33 Talbot, "Byzantine Pilgrimage," 103; Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 8.

who led a mostly heremitic lifestyle interrupted only by weekly gatherings primarily to celebrate the divine liturgy, but that a mixed form of the coenobitic and anchoretic way of life was practiced there. This monastic form spread from Bithynian Olympos already in the ninth century, thence to Mt. Athos and all over Byzantium.[34]

During his stay at Mar Saba Lazaros developed his particular ascetic way of living, as he used to tell the monks of the monasteries he founded later on Mount Galesion.[35] Even his choice of the site for his foundation may have been influenced by his experience in Mar Saba in the Kidron valley, since Lazaros praised the arid terrain which was unsuited for horticulture as ideal for monks, pointing out to his brothers that "the fathers of old always sought out the deserts and most uncomfortable places, not those which had springs and leafy trees and other physical comforts."[36] Indeed the landscape had a considerable impact on which kind of monastic life was practiced; mountainous regions were more suitable for the life that Lazaros intended for his foundations, following the Middle Byzantine lavriote tradition of the Monastery of St Sabas.[37]

Lazaros left Mar Saba and the Holy Land shortly after the destruction of the church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1009, having spent between sixteen and nineteen years in Palestine.[38] The life describes these events in the following way:

> But God, Who loves men, and Who of old ordered Jacob to depart to his homeland and arranged for Moses to return to Egypt again for the salvation of his own people, also (for reasons that He alone understands)

34 Also supporting this supposition is the fact that a *typikon* of Mar Saba, which is dated to the twelfth century but likely reflects older traditions, describes a way of life which resembles the Middle Byzantine *laura* rather than that of Late Antiquity; *BMFD*, 4:1317. I would like to thank Zachary Chitwood for this reference. For a differentiation between the Late Antique Palestinian and Middle Byzantine forms of the *laura*, foundational is Denise Papachryssanthou, "La vie monastique dans les campagnes byzantines du VIIIe au XIe siècle: Ermitages, groupes, communautés," *Byzantion* 43 (1973): 158–180.

35 "Vita S. Lazari," § 17, 515 (Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 99): "During all the years he spent in the monastery of St. Sabas, as he himself often said when asked by the brothers, he never drank wine outside the church, nor did he taste oil or cheese or any of the other things which make the flesh fat, nor did he lie on his side but he made a specially designed seat and would sit on it when he partook of a moment of sleep."

36 "Vita S. Lazari," § 216, 574 (Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 310). Talbot, "Byzantine Pilgrimage," 108; Alice-Mary Talbot, "Founders' Choices: Monastery Site Selection in Byzantium," in *Founders and Refounders of Byzantine Monasteries*, ed. Margaret Mullett (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 2007) 43–62, here 53–54.

37 Rosemary Morris, *Monks and Laymen in Byzantium, 843–1118* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 42.

38 Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 8.

> arranged for this man to go back again to his own country (even though he was unwilling), for the salvation of the many people who have been saved and who are still being saved through him until the close of this age. For at that time, with God's permission, the sacrilegious and abominable Agarenes [Muslim Arabs] rose up against the Christians and laid waste to almost the whole civilized world, together with the monasteries and churches in it.[39]

As the reason for Lazaros' departure, the life gives the persecution by the Muslims. Not only were a lot of people, monks and laymen killed, but "even worse," many denied their faith.[40] The route Lazaros took on his way home is interesting since he went not directly to Antioch but instead took a detour to Damascus. A reason for this is not given in the text. Maybe Lazaros intended to visit the shrine of St. John the Baptist in the Umayyad Mosque. In any case, Lazaros was not in a hurry to leave Syria, as one might expect after the reports of the assaults of the Muslims. Subsequently, he also visited the Wondrous Mountain and the Monastery of the stylite St. Symeon the Younger in the vicinity of Antioch. As is stated in the life, Lazaros decided later on Mt. Galesion to take the roof off of his pillar to live in the open air "in imitation of the wondrous Symeon."[41]

In this vita three main narrative elements can be identified with regard to the Holy Land. First, from early on Lazaros had a burning desire to visit the Holy Land, but again and again he was prevented from doing so until he reached the age of twenty-five. Second, in Palestine he entered one of the famous monasteries in the Judean desert where he lived for some years and developed his own spiritual predilections and ascetic habits. Third, due to the persecution of the impious and brutal Muslims, he had to leave the country against his will. But this served a higher purpose by contributing to the sanctification of his homeland and the salvation of many souls inside the borders of the Byzantine Empire by the foundation of his monastic community on Mt. Galesion.[42]

39 "Vita S. Lazari," § 19, 515 (Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 101).
40 "Vita S. Lazari," § 19–21, 515 (Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 102–103).
41 "Vita S. Lazari," § 31, 519 (Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 118).
42 For these monasteries, cf. Morris, *Monks*, 41–42; *BMFD*, 1:148–155.

3 St. Christodoulos and Palestine

St. Christodoulos, the founder of the Monastery of St. John the Theologian on the island Patmos, was born in Bithynia in the 1020s.[43] According to Christodoulos' own biographical account in the rule (*hypotyposis*) for his monastery that he composed in 1091 and which could be regarded as hagiographical text,[44] he left his family to join a monastery while still a child. He continues:

> To Palestine I went, desiring, to venerate the holy steps of our Lord, but most of all choosing, like those of old, "to lodge in the wilderness." So, after worshiping at the holy places to my fill, conversing with none but the luminaries and fathers there—and bearing fruit … through imitation of their life—I presently moved to the most desolate parts of the country settling there for some time. But then the Saracen swarm made this impossible. They appeared in all regions of Palestine, and spread like a monstrous hailstorm, with a baneful rattling and gibbering, destroying and annihilating the whole Christian society. As I did not wish to fall into the sin of self-will (but for this I would not have been seen clinging to life!) I removed from thence, expelled, as it were, and driven out by the barbarian phalanx …[45]

Obviously, Christodoulos was very much influenced in his personal spirituality by his stay in the Judean desert. In his *Rule* he made the liturgical services of Mar Saba obligatory in his foundation on Patmos.[46] And like Lazaros, Christodoulos as well combined in his monastic foundation the coenobitic form with the possibility for a few chosen ones to live an anchoretic life. That Christodoulos believed that the mixed form of coenobitic and anchoretic way

43 Anthony Kirby, "Hosios Christodoulos: An Eleventh-Century Byzantine Saint and His Monasteries," *Byzantinoslavica* 57.2 (1996): 293–309, here 293–294.

44 *BMFD*, 2:568–569.

45 St. Christodoulos, "Hypotyposis," in *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, ed. Franz Miklosich and Josef Müller (Vienna: Gerold, 1890), 6:59–80, here 60 (English translation in *BMFD* 2:579).

46 St. Christodoulos, "Hypotyposis," 71 (*BMFD* 2:587): "I command, therefore, and dispose that the singing in church and the whole order of psalmsinging and prayers, to put it summarily, in this holy and venerable monastery of ours be conducted according to the *typikon* of the lavra at Jerusalem of our holy father Sabas, the great desert teacher." This stipulation was quite common in Byzantine *typika* of this time, even if the authors had never visited Palestine; cf. John Thomas, "The Imprint of Sabaitic Monasticism on Byzantine Monastic *Typika*," in *The Sabaite Heritage*, 73–84 (cf. above n. 2).

of life represented, to some extent, the classic Palestinian form of lavriote life can be seen in his description of monastic life at Latros, where he spent several years after he left Palestine. While some monks practiced ascetism in groups of two or three and others chose the cenobitic life, a third group "could be seen, at once separate and together, maintaining, I may say, a lavra, in the ancient tradition of the fathers."[47]

Christodoulos' first hagiographic life, written between 1120 and 1150 by John, metropolitan of Rhodes, gives a few more details.[48] He left home when still a youth to join a monastery on Bithynian Mt. Olympos because his parents wanted to give him in marriage. He stayed there until the death of his spiritual father and then went first to Rome to visit the tombs of saints Peter and Paul, and then to Jerusalem where Christ had been crucified and ascended into heaven. He also visited Bethlehem to see Christ's manger and swaddling-clothes. Then he went to the desert, as he was now at the age of twenty-five old enough. He joined one of the holy men there. Maybe at the same time or afterwards he entered one of the desert monasteries, obviously the Monastery of St Sabas. There he obeyed the *hēgoumenos* in all matters and was indefatigable in his endeavors. He abstained from the pleasures of the senses, never drank wine, only water, and ate just bread with salt. However, since Satan could not bear such an ascetic, he induced the descendants of Hagar, the Hagarenes, to assault the desert monasteries. Those holy fathers that were not killed were taken captive. Christodoulos, however, escaped and decided to leave, following the commandment of the gospel which says: "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next" (Matthew 10:23).[49]

The *enkomion* for Christodoulos by the Patmian monk Athanasios, who later became patriarch of Antioch, is dependent on John's life and was probably written between 1156–1170 to promote the cult of the saint.[50] According to this

47 St. Christodoulos, "Hypotyposis," 61 (*BMFD* 2:580). Papachryssanthou, "La vie monastique," 170; cf. also Pamela Armstrong and Anthony Kirby, "Text and Stone: Evergetis, Christodoulos and Meletios," in *The Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh-Century Monasticism: Papers of the Third Belfast Byzantine International Colloquium, 1–4 May 1992*, ed. Margaret Mullett and Anthony Kirby (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1994), 146–161, here 148–150; *BMFD*, 2:564, 570.

48 Symeon A. Paschalidis, "The Hagiography of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, Volume 1: *Periods and Places*, ed. Stephanos Efthymiadis (Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 143–171, here 151.

49 John of Rhodes, "Bios kai politeia tou hosiou patros hēmōn Christodoulou," ed. Ioannes Sakkelion, in Kyrillos Boines, *Akolouthia hiera tou hosiou kai theophorou patros hēmōn Christodoulou tou thaumatourgou* (Athens, 1884), 109–133, here 115–118.

50 Paschalidis, "Hagiography," 151.

eulogy the *philerēmos*, the lover of the desert, had in mind to stay his whole life there. But just as Satan tempted Christ in the desert, so he sent at the time of Christodoulos the descendants of Hagar. But maybe this was a work of divine providence, according to the words of the Gospel: "Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house" (Matthew 10:15).[51] Obviously, the work of Christodoulos was regarded as more effective and important if done in Byzantium. Thus, he returned there and, after having spent several years on Mount Latros, founded two monasteries, first on Kos and then on Patmos.[52]

In comparison to the life of Lazaros, the hagiographic tradition of St. Christodoulos shows similar elements. Although his journey to the Holy Land is not depicted as a flight from marriage and although he did not have to overcome obstacles to get there, it is nevertheless stressed that he had reached the age of twenty-five before he joined one of the hermits. Just like Lazaros, he lived for some time in the Judean desert, excelling in his ascetic life. And finally it was due to the persecutions of the Muslims that he was obliged to leave the country against his will. However, again this was ultimately for the benefit of Christianity inside the borders of the Byzantine Empire.

4 Palestine in the Lives of St. Meletios the Younger

Meletios the Younger is less well known than the two saints mentioned above. He was probably born in 1030s in the village of Moutalaske in Cappadocia, the birth place of the Palestinian monastic father St. Sabas, and died about 1110 in the monastery that he had founded on Mt. Myoupolis near Thebes, that still bears his name.[53] His cult was promoted and developed in the Comnenian

51 Athanasios of Antioch, "Enkomion," ed. Ioannes Sakkelion, in Boines, *Akolouthia*, 134–162, here 136–137.

52 For his foundations cf. Kirby, "Hosios Christodoulos," 299–309; *BMFD*, 2:564–578.

53 For the problems of the chronology of Meletios' life cf. Charis Messis, "Deux versions de la même 'verité': Les deux vies d'hosios Mélétios au XIIe siècle," in *Les vies des saints à Byzance: genre littéraire ou biographie historique? Actes du IIe Colloque International Philologique Hermēneia, Paris, 6–7–8 juin 2002*, ed. Paolo Odorico et al. (Paris: Centre d'études byzantines, néo-helléniques et sud-est européennes; École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2004), 303–345, here 313 note 30; Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, "Ho hosios Meletios ho neos (per. 1035–1105)," in *Theologia* 13 (1935): 97–125, here 100; Pamela Armstrong, "Alexios Komnenos, Holy Men and Monasteries," in *Alexios I Komnenos: Papers of the Second Belfast Byzantine International Colloquium, 14–16 April 1989*, ed. Margaret Mullett and D. Smythe (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Enterprises, 1996), 219–231, here 226–228; Armstrong and Kirby, "Text and Stone," 152–153.

period, to which two quite prominent hagiographers contributed, Nicholas of Methone and Theodore Prodromos, who wrote their lives in the 1140s.[54]

According to these texts Meletios ran away from home at the age of 15 or 16 to avoid marriage, just as Christodoulos had done, and went to Constantinople where he took the monastic habit. After three years he left to travel to Rome and Jerusalem, but soon suspended his journey to stay for more than ten years in an oratory (*euktērion*) near Thebes.[55] So, although it is not explicitly stated, he was of the age of about 28 when he left for Jerusalem. His travels in the Holy Land are reported in more detail by Theodore Prodromos, who somehow connects his departure from Thebes with the attempt of a noble Theban lady to seduce him. Prodromos then states that he wanted to remain silent about what happened to the saint in the Holy Land, but nevertheless describes in a rather rhetorical style how he was beaten and stoned by the Hagarenes who stood in his way, threatening his life if he would not throw the cross—which he was obviously wearing—on the ground and trample on it. From this danger he was rescued against all hope by a combatant (*symmachon*) whom God had sent him from "*kalē Arabia*" as Prodromos puts it quite cryptically, probably meaning a (Christian?) Arab.[56] He stayed three years in Palestine, visiting the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, Galilee, the river Jordan, and the deserts on both sides. Afterwards he returned to Thebes to take care of his own flock again.[57]

Although this report is rather short, still some similarities can be detected. Again it takes many years until the saint could fulfill his desire to go to the Holy Land. Actually it seems that these saints' lives are making a statement that one should not undertake this journey before one has reached at least the age of twenty-five. This quasi age threshold might be connected with the fact that in the Byzantine legal tradition one's majority began between the ages of 20 and 25. For the ordination of a deacon as well, a minimum age of 25 years was tra-

54 Paschalidis, "Hagiography," 152. According to Armstrong, "Alexios Komnenos," 224, and Iōannēs Polemēs, *Hoi bioi tou hagiou Meletiou tou Neou* (Athens: Ekdoseis Kanakē, 2018), 19–20, Theodore Prodromos reworked the text of Nikolaos. Cf. also Papadopoulos, "Ho hosios Meletios," 97–100; Messi, "Deux versions," 313–319; Michael Angold, *Church and Society in Byzantium under the Comneni, 1081–1261* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 373.

55 Nikolaos of Methone, "Bios tou hosiou patros hēmōn Meletiou tou en tō horei tēs Myoupoleōs askēsantos," in Polemēs, *Hoi bioi tou hagiou Meletiou tou Neou*, 30–150, esp. 30–46; Theodoros Prodromos, "Bios tou hosiou patros hēmōn Meletiou tou Neou," ibid., 152–254, esp. 152–174.

56 The expression *kalē Arabia* is quite unusual. *Eudaimōn Arabia* would have been more common.

57 Theodoros Prodromos, "Bios," 172–174. In the brief note in Nikolaos of Methone, "Bios," 46, only the visit to the Holy Sites is mentioned.

ditionally prescribed.[58] In view of the actual dangers of this trip and its many temptations, even these saintly men needed to be educated and trained as monks before they reached the spiritual maturity necessary for such an enterprise.

The brutal *Hagarēnoi*, Muslim Arabs, also make their appearance, although they are not the reason for Meletios' departure. Meletios is not at all depicted as having the intention of staying in Palestine for the rest of his life. Instead, Theodore Prodromos makes it clear that he had to perform his duty for the sake of his community in Greece. This was his actual task which he fulfilled by finally founding his monastery on Mount Myoupolis. In doing this he was obviously influenced by Palestinian monasticism. As Theodore Prodromos recounts, Meletios visited several monasteries. Furthermore, the connection with St. Sabas is stressed, who is designated as his compatriot.[59] Theodore Prodromos explicitly states that Meletios followed his footsteps.[60] Accordingly, his foundation consisted of a coenobitic community and a number of anchorites. Indeed, Meletios' foundation became one of the richest of its time, with more than 100 regular monks and 24 places called *paralauria*, where one went to live separately.[61]

5 Palestine in the Writings of St. Neophytos Enkleistos

St. Neophytos Enkleistos is again a different case. We do not have a life for him, which, however, is no surprise (according to Michael Angold) since Neophytos propagated his own cult to such an extent in his own writings that a separate life would have been almost superfluous.[62] And indeed, his testamentary *typikon* dated to 1214 is rich in information about his life.

58 According to the Byzantine legal tradition, majority began between 20 and 25; Despoina Ariantzi, "Introduction: Approaches to Byzantine Adolescence (6th–11th centuries)," in *Coming of Age in Byzantium: Adolescence and Society*, ed. Despoina Ariantzi (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 1–18, here 1; Béatrice Caseau, "Too Young to Be Accountable: Is 15 Years Old a Threshold in Byzantium?," in Ariantzi, *Coming of Age*, 19–28, here 19–20; Christof Rudolf Kraus, *Kleriker im späten Byzanz: Anagnosten, Hypodiakone, Diakone und Priester 1261–1453* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 23–24.

59 Nikolaos of Methone, "Bios," 32.

60 Theodoros Prodromos, "Bios," 158.

61 Nikolaos of Methone, "Bios," 100: "*idazontōs oikēsai*". Armstrong and Kirby, "Text and Stone," 153–154; Angold, *Church and Society*, 268.

62 Angold, *Church and Society*, 374.

According to this text he was born on Cyprus in 1134. To avoid marriage, he joined the Monastery of St. John Chrysostom on Mount Koutzovendis, which seems to have had a special relationship with the Holy Land.[63] There he was tonsured in 1152. He "was greatly vexed by night and by day by love for the contemplative life" but was prevented from this by the superiors of the monastery because of his tender youth. After six years of service there, however, Neophytos left in 1158, at the age of 24, for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[64] So here again the wish to live an ascetic life in *hēsychia* is combined with the journey to Palestine. Neophytos continues like this:

> Then, therefore, betaking myself from the monastery I made my way to the holy places of Jerusalem, in part for the sake of pilgrimage and also lest within these deserts I might chance upon a solitary and eremitical man and might then follow him. For the sake of which, having first passed through the regions of Tiberias up until the desert in which Christ blessed the loaves of bread, the mountainous areas of Magdala as well as Mount Tabor, then indeed, following the veneration of the Holy and life giving Sepulchre, I travelled around the desert of Souka, the torrent of St. Sabbas and the lands of the Jordan and of Khozebiah, looking around holes like a hunter of bees, but having failed in my desire I was naturally upset. Having sojourned for six months there, I was told through a vision, by the mercy of God, that it was necessary for me not [to stay] in this desert, but to travel to another place, upon which, it said, the king would descend and at that place would stamp some bread.[65]

This report is astonishing with regard to the fact that Neophytos was allegedly not able to find a hermitical man to follow. It is true that in this period the Holy Land was ruled by the Latins, but this did not lead to a decline of Orthodox monasticism, but rather quite the contrary, as the report of the pilgrim John

63 Catia Galatariotou, *The Making of a Saint: The Life Times and the Sanctification of Neophytus the Recluse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 63–67. Johannes Pahlitzsch, *Graeci und Suriani im Palästina der Kreuzfahrerzeit. Beiträge und Quellen zur Geschichte des griechisch-orthodoxen Patriarchats von Jerusalem* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 2001), 162. A patriarch of Jerusalem from the middle of the 12th century, John IX, also originated from the Monastery of St. John Chrysostomos; ibid., 145.

64 Neophytos Enkleistos, "Typikē diathēkē," in *Ho hagios Neophytos ho Enkleistos kai hē typikē diathēkē tou*, ed. Athanasios B. Glaros (Athens: Herodotos, 2013), 299–300 [English trans. Nicholas Coureas, *The Foundation Rules of Medieval Cypriot Monasteries: Makhairas and St. Neophytos* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2003), 136].

65 Neophytos Enkleistos, "Typikē diathēkē," 300–301 (Coureas, *Foundation*, 136).

Phokas, or rather Doukas, from 1177 and the work of Andrew Jotischky demonstrate.[66] So while on the one hand Neophytos emphasizes the importance for him of the tradition of Palestinian monasticism by mentioning his journey to the Holy Land, on the other hand the function of this narrative is obviously to demonstrate that his true domain was elsewhere. So he indeed returned to Paphos on Cyprus. Since he was prevented from sailing on to Mount Latros, he settled in the vicinity of Paphos and started a life as a solitary ascetic. This was the beginning of his monastic foundation; certainly not without purpose Neophytos gives as the date for this the birthday of St. John the Baptist, the role model for all hermits.[67]

In Neophytos' hagiographic writings which he composed for his community, the motif of flight from the world into the Palestinian desert as the start of the new life of the saint recurs.[68] One example is the panegyric on St. Alypios the Stylite, a seventh-century ascetic and monastic founder from Paphlagonia. According to Neophytos, Alypios was not able to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. When he was downcast, an angel appeared in a vision and told him not to grieve, because the Holy Land is indeed everywhere. This accords remarkably with Neophytos' autobiographical report.[69]

A quite extraordinary text is Neophytos' account of another stylite, a Georgian called Gabriel.[70] Clearly Neophytos, who consistently defined himself as *enkleistos*, a recluse, had a preference for stylites since stylites and recluses were considered as an elite among the monks, being "immobile ascetics."[71] Gabriel lived as a hermit for roughly eleven years in various places in the Holy Land before he finally entered the Monastery of St. Sabas. Sometime later he was allowed to settle on a pillar in the vicinity of the monastery. After some time, three demons appeared to him in the forms of St. Sabas, Symeon the Stylite, and Stephen Trichinas, who sought to seduce him to deny Mary and worship Satan.

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66 Andrew Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude: Hermits and Monks in the Crusader States* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 74–83. For the dating and the correction of John Doukas' name cf. Charis Messis, "Littérature, voyage et politique au XIIe siècle: l'ekphrasis des lieux saints de Jean 'Phokas'," in *Ekphrasis: la représentation des monuments dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slaves: réalités et imaginaires*, ed. Vladimír Vavřínek, Paolo Odorico, and Vlastimil Drbal (Prague: Euroslavica, 2011), 146–166. On John Doukas' description of the saints in the Judean desert, in which he very much followed Late Antique models, cf. ibid., 157–159. I am indebted to Max Ritter for this reference.

67 Neophytos Enkleistos, "Typikē diathēkē," 305 (Coureas, *Foundation*, 137).

68 Galatariotou, *Making of a Saint*, 77–78.

69 Galatariotou, *Making of a Saint*, 102–103.

70 Neophytos Enkleistos, "Logos peri tinos monachou en tēi Palaistinēi," ed. Henri Delehaye, "Saints de Chypre," *Analecta Bollandiana* 26 (1907): 161–297, here 162–175.

71 Galatariotou, *Making of a Saint*, 104–105.

This proceeded to the point that Gabriel, under the influence of the demons, even tried to murder a neighboring hermit. Thereafter he was transferred to the Monastery of St. Euthymios, where he was demoted to perform manual labor. Over the course of time two demons were thus exorcised, while the third, however, remained in his body. At the time of the conquest of the Crusader States by Saladin in 1187, Gabriel was taken captive and brought to Damascus.[72]

With this Neophytos concludes his account, stating that he does not know what became of Gabriel. However, according to Neophytos, Gabriel's story was known in all of Palestine and terrified anchorites as well as coenobitic monks. Only in a marginal note dated 1205 which could have been written by Neophytos himself do we find the remark that at that time Gabriel had finally been released from the last demon and lived as an anchorite in the region of Antioch.[73]

This story, placed in the milieu of Palestinian monasticism, is actually the opposite of a saint's life or a panegyric. As Neophytos himself says, this story was to serve as an instruction for his community to be prepared for the illusions of the devil. But it most probably was also meant as an admonition of what could happen if one who had not reached the same level of sanctity as the older fathers of the desert tried to follow their example.

6 The Function of Muslims in 11th and 12th-Century Byzantine Hagiography

The Muslims seem to have a specific function in the texts presented here. The life of Lazaros is also in this regard the most explicit one. We find there quite a long description of the destruction of the Anastasis by the Muslims, who in a stereotypical way are called sacrilegious, abominable, and dog-like. The persecutions of that time resulted in the death and conversion to Islam of many Christians. Thus when Lazaros heard that a former monk from the Monastery of St. Sabas had converted to Islam, he tried to persuade him to return to his former faith. However, the former monk replied that he could do this only if Lazaros got permission from the local emir. Although Lazaros received this permission, the faith of the monk was too weak, so that he left Lazaros clandestinely during the night.[74] That he did not return to Christianity despite Lazaros'

72 Neophytos Enkleistos, "Logos," 164–173. Delehaye, "Saints," 280–282.

73 Delehaye, "Saints," 281–282; Jotischky, *Perfection*, 94–95.

74 "Vita S. Lazari," §§ 19–21, 515–516 (Greenfield, *Life of Lazaros*, 101–105).

offer to help him was ascribed solely to his lack of faith and his desperation. It is nowhere suggested that the apostate found Islam attractive in any sort of way. Islam as such is not mentioned at all.[75]

In the accounts of Christodoulos' life we do not find any further concrete historical information about Muslims. They are reduced to a mere topos, being more or less an instrument of divine providence in convincing the saint that he had to return to Byzantine lands. The most drastic terms could be found in Christodoulos' own account of his life. The Muslims are dehumanized and referred to as a natural disaster in that they are compared to a "monstrous hailstorm" that destroys and annihilates the whole Christian society and to a "barbarian phalanx."[76]

In Prodromos' life of Meletios, Muslims are briefly mentioned as assaulting the saint, and in the autobiographical part of the *typikon* of Neophytos there are no references to Muslims at all. However, in Neophytos' account of the stylite Gabriel, Muslims, called again barbarians, are quite prominent since he was captured and brought to Damascus by them in the course of Saladin's conquest of the crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. In this context Neophytos laments "how the holy flock was expelled from this Holy Land and the Holy Sites were delivered to the dogs."[77] At first, he is amazed and does not comprehend how this could have happened, before he finally comes to the realization that some persons in Palestine had clearly sinned and thus must have incurred the wrath of God. In the next paragraph, however, he is eager to stress that one could find a harbor of salvation anywhere, referring to the same quotation of Matthew 10:23 that we have already seen in the life of Christodoulos: "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next."

Putting it all together, the recurring motif of the persecuting Muslims seems to serve two purposes. First, as mentioned above, to provide a reason why the saints left the Holy Land to found their monasteries inside Byzantine borders. And second, these texts could be understood as admonitions to the monks not to go to the Holy Land: life there is extremely dangerous. In any case, it was not necessary to go there since one could find salvation anywhere.

75 Peter Schadler, "Gregory the Cellarer," in *CMR*, 3:160–164.

76 Cf. above, note 45.

77 Neophytos Enkleistos, "Logos," 173–174. Galatariotou, *Making of a Saint*, 206–207.

7 Conclusion

From the end of the ninth until the end of the eleventh centuries, a remarkable revival of monasticism in Byzantium can be discerned.[78] The establishment of mixed houses which were created as *koinobia* but offered the individual the opportunity to progress from the communal life to that of the solitary within the community and finally to that of the hermit, was one part of this development. Michael Angold stresses that during this period of monastic renewal certain monasteries preserved the core of the Byzantine monastic tradition and were the custodians of monastic standards. Western Asia Minor with the holy mountains of Bithynia was, at least at first, the most important area. Palestinian monasteries are, however, not included in Angold's list of such monastic centers.[79]

The lives of some of the monastic founders from the eleventh and twelfth centuries present a different picture. While Palestinian monasteries are scarcely mentioned in Byzantine hagiography of the period between the middle of the ninth century and the 960s, the constant reference in the saints' lives afterwards is without doubt connected to the Byzantine re-conquest of Northern Syria and the consequential Byzantinization of the Melkite Church, including its monasteries. Thus the Holy Land once again became an attractive goal for wandering monks.[80] Accordingly, the lives discussed here must be understood as expressions of what the Holy Land and especially the famous monasteries of the Judean desert meant for Orthodox monks in Byzantium in that period. These texts created a line of tradition between the new foundations and age-old Palestinian monasticism, even if the current form of monastic life was very much different from the Late Antique *lauras*. The texts show that the saintly founders were able to participate personally in the Palestinian tradition by going there. Thus the physical presence of the protagonists in Palestine establishes a connection to the Holy Land. At the same time the lives also provide explanations why these extraordinary men did not remain in the Holy Land but returned to Byzantium.

Indeed, these texts leave no doubt that the future of Orthodox monasticism lay in Byzantium. Thus the regular monks living in the foundations of these saints should stay where they are. The different texts treated here give a clear notion of how monastic life should be lived according to the saintly founders. While anchoretic life is represented as the most advanced form of monastic

78 Morris, *Monks*, 18–19, 31.

79 Angold, *Church and Society*, 266–267.

80 Morris, *Monks*, 34; cf. also Jotischky, "St Sabas," 12–13, 17–18.

life, only a few chosen ones are prepared and actually permitted to follow this path.[81] However, the fact that this attitude is evident in all these texts, seems to indicate that quite a few of the average monks desired to travel to the Holy Land and to follow the model of the venerated desert fathers.

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81 Papachryssanthou, "La vie monastique," 160–162, shows that also the saints' lives of the eighth to the eleventh centuries insisted that a monk had to live first in a *koinobion* before he could get the permission of the *hēgoumenos* to live a solitary life.

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CHAPTER 12

Inquiring of "Beelzebub": Timothy and al-Jāḥiẓ on Christians in the ʿAbbāsid Legal System

Andrew Platt and Nathan P. Gibson

1 Introduction

One of the vital issues facing members of Iraq's pluralistic society during the ʿAbbāsid period was how to navigate the overlapping legal systems of the various religious communities.[1] The ʿAbbāsids allowed non-Muslim protected peoples (*ahl al-dhimma*) a large degree of autonomy in handling cases within their communities, but the interface between Islamic and non-Islamic legal systems produced some troublesome problems that leaders and intellectuals on all sides had to address. This chapter compares the perspectives of two ninth-century writers: Timothy I, Catholicos (Patriarch) of the Church of the East (r. 780–823)[2] and ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (776–868/9), a popular Muslim author of the following generation.[3]

1 We are grateful to our colleagues Rocio Daga, Miriam Lindgren Hjälm, Peter Tarras, Ronny Vollandt, and Vevian Zaki for their comments on an earlier version of this article. Our gratitude also goes to Christian Müller for his elucidation of certain juristic issues pertaining to al-Jāḥiẓ's text. Any remaining errors are, of course, our own.

2 For Sidney Griffith's scholarship on Timothy, see "Jews and Muslims in Christian Syriac and Arabic Texts of the Ninth Century," *Jewish History* 3 (1988): 65–94; "From Patriarch Timothy I to Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq: Philosophy and Christian Apology in Abbasid Times; Reason, Ethics and Public Policy," in *Christians and Muslims in Dialogue in the Islamic Orient of the Middle Ages*, ed. Martin Tamcke (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2007), 75–98; "The Syriac Letters of Patriarch Timothy I and the Birth of Christian Kalām in the Muʿtazilite Milieu of Baghdad and Baṣrah in Early Islamic Times," in *Syriac Polemics: Studies in Honour of Gerrit Jan Reinink*, ed. Wout Jac van Bekkum, Jan Willem Drijvers, and Alexander Cornelis Klugkist (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 103–132; "Patriarch Timothy I and an Aristotelian at the Caliph's Court," in *The Christian Heritage of Iraq: Collected Papers from the Christianity of Iraq IV Seminar Days*, ed. Erica C.D. Hunter (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 38–53.

3 While the topic of Christians in Islamic courts has clear parallels to the Jewish situation as seen in the documentary evidence from the Cairo Genizah, it is unfortunately beyond the scope of this study to investigate these. Readers should consult the following with their references: Marina Rustow, "The Legal Status of *Ḏimmī*-s in the Fatimid East: A View from the Palace in Cairo," in *The Legal Status of Ḏimmī-s in the Islamic West* (*Second/Eighth-Ninth/Fifteenth Centuries*), ed. Maribel Fierro and John Tolan (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 307–332; Eve Krakowski and Marina Rustow, "Formula as Content: Medieval Jewish Institutions,

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There were a host of functional issues involved in the interchange between these judicial systems, such as jurisdiction, the location of the proceedings, and the weight of outsiders' testimony. Moreover, the situation was problematic for both Christians and Muslims: Timothy and al-Jāḥiẓ both wrote with concern about how their coreligionists dealt with outsiders on such legal matters. As we will show, the arguments they made went beyond conventional attempts to preserve existing power structures or prescribe procedural mechanisms. Each was fighting for the well-being of his respective community against what he viewed as potentially disastrous threats and temptations to apostasy. This chapter focuses more on understanding these fears than on explicating the details of the judicial system; in particular, we attend to these writers' hermeneutical motivations as they appealed to canonical texts. First, however, it will be helpful to outline some of the basic points of the system during this period.

2 The Multi-Court System

By the time the ʿAbbāsids came to power, Christian and Jewish communities had maintained their own legal systems for centuries. Under both Roman and Persian law, Christians and Jews could go to their own religious authorities for arbitration rather than appearing before a government magistrate.[4]

For Muslims, it was the caliph who held the ultimate judicial authority, not merely by virtue of his political power, but also by right of his spiritual leadership of the community. This authority was delegated to the *qāḍī*s or "judges," whose role was primarily one of arbitrating between litigants.[5] While judges during the Umayyad period were regionally appointed and were to some extent subject to the authority of local governors, the ʿAbbāsids started centralizing judicial appointments and created the office of the chief judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*), which was first occupied by Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm (731–798).[6] In the

the Cairo Geniza, and the New Diplomatics," *Jewish Social Studies* 20 (2014): 111–146; Geoffrey Khan, *Arabic Legal and Administrative Documents in the Cambridge Genizah Collections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1993.

4 See Uriel Simonsohn, *A Common Justice: The Legal Allegiances of Christians and Jews under Early Islam* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Antoine Fattal, *Le statut légal des non-musulmans en pays d'Islam* (Beirut: Impr. catholique, 1958), 344–345.

5 Mathieu Tillier, "Courts," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics*, ed. Emad El-Din Shahin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 227–232, here 227–229; Mathieu Tillier, "Judicial Authority and Qāḍīs' Autonomy under the ʿAbbāsids," *Al-Masāq* 26 (2014): 119–131, here 124, 127. Parallel systems—the police force and the *maẓālim* courts—existed for dealing with offenses concerning the state.

6 Tillier, "Courts," 228; Tillier, "Judicial Authority," 121–123; Muhammad Khalid Masud, Rudolph

first half of the ninth century, the chief judge Aḥmad ibn Abī Du'ād centralized this authority when he acted as inquisitor for the caliph's *miḥna* policy, dismissing and punishing judges who did not conform to the doctrine of the created Qur'ān.[7]

The *qāḍī* had a clear prerogative—even obligation—to judge between Muslim litigants, but in what situations would a Muslim *qāḍī* judge cases involving non-Muslims? Most Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, and sometimes other non-Muslim communities within the realm had the status of *ahl al-dhimma* ("protected people"), meaning they had a pact of protection (*dhimma*) that guaranteed their safety in exchange for paying a poll tax (*jizya*).[8] This protection entailed the arbitration of at least some types of *dhimmī* cases. In fact, jurists discussed whether *qāḍī*s should hold court in their homes or in the mosque, some favoring the former because, among other reasons, the mosque was less accessible to *dhimmī*s.[9]

Jurisdiction was a complicated matter that might take into account the wishes and communal affiliation of the plaintiffs, the nature of the case, and

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Peters, and David Powers, "Qāḍīs and Their Courts: An Historical Survey," in *Dispensing Justice in Islam: Qadis and Their Judgements*, ed. Muhammad Khalid Masud, Rudolph Peters, and David S. Powers (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1–46, here 8–13; Brannon Wheeler, "Abū Yūsuf," *EI3*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_EI3_COM_23440.

7 John Turner, "Aḥmad b. Abī Du'ād," in *EI3*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_EI3_SIM_0064. On the *miḥna* in general, see particularly the letter of Caliph al-Ma'mūn to Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm in al-Ṭabarī, trans. C.E. Bosworth, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī, vol. 32* (*The Reunification of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate: The Caliphate of al-Maʾmūn A.D. 812–833/A.H. 198–213*) (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1987), 199–204.

8 Q 9:29 was considered to be the qur'ānic basis for this arrangement. On the disputed origins of the *dhimmī* status, see Milka Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire: From Surrender to Coexistence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Mark Cohen, "What Was the Pact of 'Umar? A Literary-Historical Study," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 23 (1999): 100–157. Muslim jurists debated who could be considered a *dhimmī*: Al-Shāfiʿī and the Andalusī jurist Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr did not consider Zoroastrians (*Majūs*) to be *ahl al-dhimma* even though they paid *jizya*, whereas the Ḥanafī jurists al-Shaybānī and Abū Yūsuf included not only Zoroastrians (whom they did not consider to be "Scripture People") [*ahl al-kitāb*], but even pagans who had a peace treaty with the Muslims. See Christian Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law: Juridical Casuistry in a Fifth/Eleventh Century Law Manual," in *The Legal Status of Ḏimmī-s*, 21–64, here 30–32; Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī Abū Yūsuf, *Abū Yūsuf's Kitāb al-Kharāj*, in *Taxation in Islam*, trans. A. Ben Shemesh, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 82–84, 88–89; al-Shaybānī, trans. Majid Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybānī's Siyar* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966), 275.

9 Mathieu Tillier, "Un espace judiciaire entre public et privé: Audiences de cadis à l'époque 'abbāside," *Annales islamologiques* 38 (2004): 491–512, here 491–492, 494 n. 29; Masud et al., "Qāḍīs and their Courts," 21; Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 38–39; cf. Tillier, "Courts," 227.

the discretion and negotiation of judges. Moreover, one must remember that the jurists' prescriptions reveal actual practice only indirectly, by showing points which were necessary or salient to address. In theory, at least, the *qāḍī* handled any cases involving at least one Muslim litigant[10] or between *dhimmī*s of different confessions.[11] *Dhimmī* authorities were generally allowed to judge affairs within their own community,[12] but al-Jāḥiẓ points out in his *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* that they could not imprison anyone or administer corporal punishment.[13] Moreover, Islamic courts in principle had jurisdiction for trials of criminal offenses.[14] Finally, *dhimmī*s could bring their case before a Muslim *qāḍī* if both parties were willing.

For a *qāḍī*, judging *dhimmī* cases raised certain issues different from those of Muslim cases. For one, qur'ānic prescriptions gave rise to a category of punishments known as *ḥudūd* (singular, *ḥadd*).[15] These were considered the "rights of God" and thus had to be administered for specified crimes even if a wronged party did not demand such punishment.[16] But should these penalties apply to *dhimmī*s as well as to Muslims? Even though some jurists maintained they applied in principle, certain exceptions had to be made, such as for drinking wine, which was allowed for the *ahl al-dhimma* but not for Muslims.[17] Sometimes *qāḍī*s could also refer *ḥadd* cases to *dhimmī* authorities.[18]

Another issue was whether Islamic law required judges to accept cases that *dhimmī* disputants brought before them. The key theoretical consideration was

10 Perhaps Abū Yūsuf's reasoning regarding who is qualified to arbitrate between Muslims and those they are fighting reflects somewhat the same logic as not allowing *dhimmī*s to judge Muslims in civilian cases: "A Dhimmī cannot be appointed as arbitrator because a non-believer cannot be a judge in matters between Muslims and their enemies" (trans. Ben Shemesh, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 64).

11 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 351.

12 Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 38.

13 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Al-Ḥayawān*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, vol. 4 (Egypt: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1938–1945), 27. Fattal mentions that the types of punishments found in Christian law codes confirm this (*Le statut légal*, 350).

14 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 351.

15 See B. Carra de Vaux, J. Schacht, and A.-M. Goichon, "Ḥadd," in *EI2*, 3:20–22; online: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2586; Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 28.

16 See Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 119–126; Carra de Vaux, et al., "Ḥadd"; Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 28, 55; Masud, et al., "Qāḍīs and their courts," 24; al-Shaybānī, *Islamic Law of Nations*, 172.

17 Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 29; compare al-Shaybānī, *Islamic Law of Nations*, 172. Al-Jāḥiẓ's argument (cited below, §8, 273–276) regarding slandering the prophet's mother illustrates the debate over the applicability of *ḥadd* punishments to non-Muslims.

18 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 120.

how to interpret Q 5:42, which seems to make arbitration between *dhimmī*s optional and Q 5:49, which commands judging between them using God's revelation. Abū Ḥanīfa, the eponymous founder of the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence, reportedly held the view that Q 5:42 did not refer to the *ahl al-dhimma* anyway and was abrogated by Q 5:49, which obligated *qāḍī*s to arbitrate in *dhimmī* matters brought to them.[19] The other founding jurists, al-Shāfiʿī, Mālik, and Ibn Ḥanbal, considered arbitration to be voluntary.[20] The Mālikī *qāḍī* Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Namarī from eleventh-century al-Andalūs even mentions an opinion (not adopted by the school) that the judge should obtain the permission of the "bishops" (or *dhimmī* authorities) before pronouncing a judgment.[21] Was the question of arbitrating *dhimmī* cases merely a theoretical one? In fact, as we will see from the *Canons* of Timothy I below, there was a motivating factor driving *dhimmī*s outside of their own court systems. This was the possibility of "forum shopping": *dhimmī* disputants who received, or expected to receive, an unfavorable ruling from their own leaders could take their case to a Muslim *qāḍī*.[22] What the jurists' discussions reveal, then, is that there was a practical side to the issue of whether or not to take *dhimmī* cases. A *qāḍī* who intervened in *dhimmī* affairs against the wishes of *dhimmī* authorities had the potential to seriously undermine the structures of that community and its relationship to the Muslim community. Legal reasoning that allowed a judge to negotiate with the leaders of other communities helped to preserve the delicate balance of interaction among groups.

The situation described above provides context for the impassioned treatments by both Christian and Muslim ninth-century authors regarding cases that involved Christians but were judged in Islamic courts. Below, we will examine first the reasoning of Timothy and then that of al-Jāḥiẓ as they each considered the implications of the multi-court system for their own community.

3 Catholicos Timothy I

In the year 804, Timothy I, Catholicos (Patriarch) of the Church of the East, called for a general synod to meet in Baghdad. He had headed his church at

19 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 355.

20 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 353–355.

21 Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 39.

22 See Mathieu Tillier, "Introduction. Le pluralisme judiciaire en Islam, ses dynamiques et ses enjeux," in *Le pluralisme judiciaire dans l'Islam prémoderne*, ed. Mathieu Tillier (Damascus: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2014), 23–40, here 37–38.

that point for over twenty years, and it had been nearly that long since his last general synod, which, in the wake of his own accession, clarified the process of election and denounced simony. By 804, the internal church issues that had marked his rise to power had settled, and the time seemed ripe to address more pressing general issues. The canons published here treated a number of topics, including hierarchy, marriage, and the books that should be read. Individually and as a whole they give extraordinary insight into the lives of Christians in the early ʿAbbāsid period.[23]

Addressing the jurisprudential needs of the Church of the East had import not just for dealing more effectively with internal affairs, but also for his community's relationship to their Muslim rulers. In the introduction to the canons, he explains:

> People sue and litigate not before the saints but before the wicked. It is as though they do not possess, as it were, laws and rulings that are appropriate for this world and for the conduct of mortal people. So in this they transgress both the apostolic and the divine law, which commands believers and everyone, even, that they should be judged not before the wicked, but rather before the saints—and that the ones who should judge are those by whom the angels together with the whole world will be judged.[24]

Moreover, when he cites his two reasons for writing a book of law, he mentions first the requests that he do so by many believers far and near, naming specifically Jacob, metropolitan of Baṣra, and Ḥabbiba, metropolitan of Arsacia (Ray);[25] but second, his desire to forestall Christians turning to Islamic courts:

> The second reason was to take away the excuse of those who transgress the divine laws. Because of the lack of rulings, statutes, and laws, they are constantly running to the chambers of outsiders and to [their] courts as though there were no statutes or rulings useful for this world. As the

23 The canons are published in Eduard Sachau, ed., *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, vol. 2 (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1908). For more on the background of the canons themselves and Timothy's relation to them, see Hans Putman, *L'église et l'islam sous Timothée I (780–823): Étude sur l'église nestorienne au temps des premiers ʿAbbasides avec nouvelle édition et traduction du Dialogue entre Timothée et al-Mahdi* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1975), 62–79.

24 Sachau, *Rechtsbücher*, 56. Author's translation.

25 Sachau, *Rechtsbücher*, 56.

> divine book says, because there is no God in Israel, they go to inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron.[26]

Thus, one of his express purposes in writing these canons is to address Christians' relationship to the multi-court system. He takes up the issue again in Canon 12, using similar language:

> Is it right for a Christian man or woman (in arbitration of disputes), to seek the judgment of outsiders?
>
> If they are Christians, how can they then go to non-Christian judges?! God speaks to them through the mouth of his prophet Elijah: "Is there no God in Israel, that you go to inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron?" If they go to non-Christian judges, how can they be Christians?! Paul speaks to them, "You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of another. You cannot drink the cup of our Lord and the cup of Beliar." Therefore, when people dare to transgress the Apostolic Rule, then [they must do] penance and almsgiving and [stand in] sackcloth and ashes.[27]

The novel aspect of the Canon in question here is not that it forbids going to outsiders for judgment. Uriel Simonsohn, in his book *A Common Justice*,[28] makes it quite clear that these sorts of ecclesiastical declarations are rather the norm than the exception, well before Islam had ever entered the picture. A strong motive of such official exhortations was to secure the ecclesiastical community against outside influences, and it had antecedents back to the beginnings of the faith. Paul issues just such an exhortation in 1 Corinthians 6. What is unique about Timothy's decree is the language he uses, and particularly the scriptures he employs. A brief look at the historical context of the Church of the East's relationship with the Muslim state will help to elucidate this.

4 The Church of the East's Relationship to Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid Power

In the Umayyad period, due to Umayyad policies on conversion and being outside the imperial political center, the Church of the East was relatively undisturbed. With the rise of the ʿAbbāsids on a more open conversion platform and

26 Sachau, *Rechtsbücher*, 56–58. Author's translation.
27 Sachau, *Rechtsbücher*, 68–69. Author's translation.
28 Simonsohn, *A Common Justice*, 47.

centering themselves politically in what was the heartland of the Church of the East, the Church of the East came into the limelight, which had both positives and negatives.[29] They were accustomed to working under non-Christians. As Timothy himself points out, they "never had a Christian king."[30] Historically, they had developed a solid working relationship with the Sassanian throne, to the extent that the Shah was integrally involved in Church life through appointing a Catholicos.[31] Because the ʿAbbāsids drew heavily on the Persians' political model, they also relied greatly on Church of the East administrators to aid in running the country. The Church shifted its patriarchal see to the new ʿAbbāsid capital in recognition of the new role they hoped to pursue in society.[32] At this point and for some time hereafter, Christians were at least a plural majority in Iraq.[33] They also held considerable influence in the ʿAbbāsid world and beyond.[34]

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29 See Andrew Thomas Platt, "The Church of the East at Three Critical Points in Its History" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2017), http://hdl.handle.net/1961/cuislandora:64700, 105–109.

30 Timothy I, "Letter to Mar Sergius," quoted in Thomas Richard Hurst, "The Syriac Letters of Timothy I (727–823): A Study in Christian-Muslim Controversy" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1986), 242.

31 For more on the history of the interaction between the Church of the East and the state in Iraq, see J.M. Fiey, *Jalons pour une histoire de l'Église en Iraq* (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1970), 113–143. See also Wilhelm Baum and Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2010), 29–41. For the Islamic era, see M.G. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005), 340–342.

32 Morony, *Iraq*, 341.

33 There are differing points of view concerning the rate at which Islam became the dominant religion in the Middle East. Bulliet claims the most rapid pace, arguing that the conversion process was 50% complete by 975; see Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 80–91. Bulliet's model argues for a conversion curve, giving a gradual slide into Islam, due to attraction and increased opportunities. Michael Morony and Hugh Kennedy seem to concur with this point of view. See Michael G. Morony, "The Age of Conversions: A Reassessment," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990), 135–150; and Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live in* (Philadelphia: Da Capo, 2007), 376. For a much later date see Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 112–113, in which Jenkins argues for a "punctuated equilibrium," meaning that there was a very gradual general growth of the Muslim population marked by periods of accelerated growth brought on by changes in society.

34 For the extent of East Syrian influence at this point see J.M. Fiey, *Pour un Oriens Christianus*

But these benefits came at a cost. Throughout the history of the East Syrian Church, even in the midst of the darkest persecutions,[35] the Church had only ever known growth, and had had no reason to question the inevitability of the world's acceptance of their king of kings—an expectation that did not significantly dim even through the trial of the Islamic conquest. Their experience with Islam in the initial century of that faith served to bolster this point of view. But while the shift of political gravity to their sphere of influence was of significant benefit to the Church, the open conversion policy was a signal of things to come.[36]

The Church of the East had hoped for the Sāsānians' conversion to Christianity, but had not feared its own people converting to Zoroastrianism, which was an ethnic religion.[37] Under the Umayyads, the high social cost of conversion to Islam had a meager payoff. But under the ʿAbbāsids, economic and political status could be conferred on anyone who would say the *shahāda* a few times. This process of social conversion took time to catch on, but it had begun, as the West Syrian *Chronicle of Zuqnin* remembers when it speaks of groups both large and small converting voluntarily.[38]

The social advantage converts gained exacerbated the challenge. A convert in the Umayyad period had abandoned his family to earn a spot in a society that scorned him. A convert in the ʿAbbāsid period had joined a greater *umma*, becoming an elite in a society yet dominated by *dhimmī*s, whose protected status also ensured their powerlessness. This was not immediately apparent after the dust of dynastic transition had settled, but the changing of the guard had

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Novus: Répertoire des diocèses syriaques orientaux et occidentaux (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993). See also from J.M. Fiey, "Chrétiens de Syrie et de Mesopotamie aux deux premiers siècles d'Islam," *Islamochristiana* 14 (1988): 71–106; and J.M. Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques sous les Abbassides, surtout à Bagdad* (*749–1258*) (Louvain: Secrétariat du Corpus SCO, 1980).

35 Under the Sāsānian Shah Shāpūr II (r. 309–379), there was a severe persecution of Christianity among those of the Persian Church. Proportionally it exceeded any persecution in pre-Constantinian Rome. For details on the situation of the Christians at the time see Sebastian Brock, "Christians in the Sasanian Empire: A Case of Divided Loyalties," *Studies in Church History* 18 (1982): 1–19.

36 See Platt, "Church of the East," 109–112.

37 Zoroastrianism was as closed to non-Persians as Judaism to non-Jews. This is not to say that conversion was impossible, just fairly difficult. It took considerable ambition, drive, or conviction to convert in such circumstances. For more on this see William Wigram, *An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church, or, The Church of the Sassanid Persian Empire, 100–640 A.D.* (Piscataway, N.J.: Gorgias Press, 2004), 34; and Addai Scher, ed., *Histoire Nestorienne* (*Chronique de Séert*) (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1911), 154.

38 Amir Harrak, trans., *The Chronicle of Zuqnīn. A.D. 488–775: Translated from Syriac with Notes and Introduction* (*Parts III and IV*) (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), 322–324.

given control of the nascent Muslim faith to those who had chosen to emphasize what up to that point had been conveniently overlooked—that their scriptures, while still favoring the Arabs, had a universal quality.[39] It was within the context of this process of transition, both in society but also in Islam, that Timothy's *Canons* fit best. These can be said to represent a Church-of-the-East response to this subtle shift in culture.

When Timothy wrote these canons, his community's uneasy relations with their rulers were never far from his mind. Even as Timothy advocated for East Syrian scholars to translate philosophy and East Syrian doctors to reside in proximity to the Caliph,[40] he sought to cordon off his flock from exposure to anything that would tempt them towards the political expediency of a conversion. He was familiar with what a draw that might be. When he ascended to the patriarchal throne, a metropolitan rival took defeat hard and apostatized to become a governor of Baṣra. In fact, in the midst of his election, Timothy himself had had to rely on the caliph's influence to secure his claim to the title of Catholicos.[41]

It was with that fresh in his mind that he developed a guarded attitude towards the state in which he and his people lived, but in which they as yet only rarely had to have meaningful interaction with Muslims.[42] While day-to-day interaction between religious communities in the *Dār al-Islām* was likely relatively limited, there were points of interaction, and perhaps that with the most potential for inspiring apostasy was the court system. If a priest, who might judge a Christian's case, promised to be unsympathetic in a lawsuit, that Christian might have incentive to seek arbitration elsewhere. Couple the appeal of a more favorable legal ruling with the scorn of one's peers, either from one's offense itself or from the stigma of seeking external arbitration, and whatever ties might have been felt towards one's own religious community paled in comparison to the obvious legal advantages of being a part of the community deciding one's case.

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39 Exclusivism and Universalism skirt a balance in Islamic thought. For more on these see Malise Ruthven, "Introduction," and Leonard Lewisohn, "The Esoteric Christianity of Islam," in *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, ed. Lloyd Ridgeon (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), xi–xx and 127–159, respectively.

40 Griffith, *Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, 45–48. See also Hurst, "Letters of Timothy," 42–43; and Putman, *L'église et l'islam*, 92.

41 Joseph of Merv had sought the intervention of Caliph al-Mahdī to see himself raised to the Catholicate. Al-Mahdī ruled against him and in favor of Timothy. See Putman, *L'église et l'islam*, 16; Hurst, "Letters of Timothy," 14–15.

42 For more on interactions between religious confessions in ʿAbbāsid times see Fiey, *Chrétiens syriaques*, 125. See also Morony, *Iraq*, 334.

Timothy explicitly discusses at least one of the incentives that was likely to draw his parishioners to Islamic courts—the prospect of legal retribution, or *qiṣāṣ* (see below, §7, 270–273). Canon 13 presents the scenario of a Christian who has been injured by another Christian and then goes to the "authority" (*šúlṭānā*) seeking vengeance. After presumably winning his lawsuit, he "injures the one who injured him." Should such a person be "prohibited (*netkle*) from the Church?" the questioner asks. Timothy's response reveals his concern to teach his flock Scriptural principles about a potentially prevalent temptation. He shows that such a person has transgressed the Scriptural commands to turn the other cheek and leave vengeance to God, such that "he has honored and preferred the judgment of outsiders and of humans [to that of God]."[43] For Timothy, the Christian principles regarding forgiveness are apparently non-negotiable; moreover, by refusing to allow his parishioners to seek retribution, he is attempting to safeguard his community from the potentially destructive force of revenge.

Another reason Christians might turn to Islamic courts was to resolve claims for which Muslims were witnesses. By allowing God-fearing Muslims as witnesses in cases that came before Christian clergy, Timothy removes this potential inducement.[44] On the whole, the Catholicos shows himself quite attuned not just to the fact that Christians were going to Muslim judges, but also to the problems that led them to do so.

As for the dangers these situations posed for his community, there were several legal factors that urged Christian disputants toward conversion.[45] First, the testimony of *dhimmī*s, when admitted at all, generally carried less weight in Islamic courts than that of Muslims.[46]

Second, conversion could sometimes lighten the punishment of a *dhimmī*. Since a *dhimmī*'s testimony could not condemn a Muslim, the jurists allowed

43 Sachau, *Rechtsbücher*, 66–67. Author's translation.

44 Canon 76, in Sachau, *Rechtsbücher*, 106–108. The motivation for this canon was suggested by Simonsohn, *A Common Justice*, 163.

45 In regard to the widespread concern over apostasy in the first few centuries after the Islamic conquest, Simonsohn points out the centrality of questions about apostasy in the legal source material of the three major groups, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian. See Uriel Simonsohn, "Conversion, Apostasy, and Penance: The Shifting Identities of Muslim Converts in the Early Islamic Period," in *Conversion in Late Antiquity: Christianity, Islam, and Beyond*, ed. Arietta Papaconstantinou, Neil McLynn, and Daniel L. Schwartz (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2015), 197–215, here 201. For the disparity between Muslims and *dhimmī*s in Muslim law see Raj Bhala, *Understanding Islamic Law: Sharī'a* (Danvers, MA: LexisNexis, 2011), 1309.

46 See the specific example of Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr in Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 27, 56, 60.

*dhimmī*s convicted by the testimony of other *dhimmī*s to escape *ḥadd* penalties by becoming Muslim.[47] In fact, Fattal calls conversion "a classic way of cheating the law," and provides several examples from Bar Hebraeus of Christians who converted to Islam after being caught in or accused of sexual sins.[48] Third, Muslim and Christian marriage and inheritance laws could provide incentives either for or against conversion, which perhaps has something to do with the extent of Timothy's focus on these issues in the *Canons*.[49]

5 Canon 12

In light of all of this, the import of Canon 12, seen above, becomes clearer. Simonsohn says this particular passage shows a degree of moderation on the part of the East Syrians compared to their West Syrian cousins.[50] But the West Syrians were not based at the center of ʿAbbāsid power. Nevertheless, the message Timothy conveys here might be more incensory than it initially appears.

Whereas the Miaphysites might declare those in contravention to their decrees anathema, Timothy simply calls them non-Christian, outsiders (*barāye*), like those they seek judgment from.[51] But when he moves to describing the outsiders using scripture, he audaciously labels them as demons or at least under demonic influence, but in such a manner that any true outsider would have difficulty nailing down. Herein we can see both Timothy's political brilliance and his scriptural capability. He quotes Elijah's rebuke of Ahaziah's messengers (2 Kings 1:3), equating these outsiders or at least their faith with none other than Beelzebub, who is a demonic lord in Syriac tradition, if not Satan himself.[52] This point is important to him, as he already brought this up in his introduction. Then, as if to drive the point home, he confirms this identity by conflating two Pauline scriptures: 1 Corinthians 10:21, on partaking from the table and cup of the Lord and demons, and 2 Corinthians 6:15, a passage with

47 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 119, notes, however, that conversion did not spare a *dhimmī* from the law of retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*), except in the case of the Shiʿites, who imposed blood money (*dīyya*) instead (114).

48 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 119–120.

49 In addition to the *Canons* themselves, see the various issues along these lines mentioned by Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr in Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law." Generally speaking, one could not inherit from someone of another religion.

50 Simonsohn, *A Common Justice*, 162.

51 Sachau, *Rechtsbücher*, 66–67 (§ 12).

52 J.L. McLaughlin, "Beelzebul," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. D.N. Freedman, A.C. Myers, and A.B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 160.

a similar theme that is the only place the New Testament employs the name *Beliar*, Lord of the underworld.[53] By merging these two passages, Timothy is able to name his opponents, using Biblical names that would not be immediately familiar to the ruling Muslim regime, the outsiders whom he is describing in this canon.

The *coup de main*, though, is the name *Beliar* itself. It is remarkable because, while it only occurs once in the Greek NT, it does not occur at all in the Peshitta NT. The primary Syriac text here uses the term *Sāṭānā* (Satan), a term that would have been recognizable to any Arabic speaker, as the Arabic term for a devil is *Shayṭān*. In other words, Timothy carefully manipulated the text in order to obfuscate his meaning to the outsiders he was speaking of, his Arab rulers.[54] By identifying those outsiders from whom judgment might be sought as under the influence of the demonic lords *Beliar* and *Beelzebub*, Timothy was able to warn his flock in the strongest possible language, without ever raising the ire of his political superiors, a move that ensured the continued support—or at least indifference—of those superiors, which was necessary for his church to thrive and continue.

6 Al-Jāḥiẓ

But how did those "outsiders" themselves see the situation to which Timothy was referring? Timothy wrote this canon around the time that a considerably younger man, the Muslim writer Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, was entering a career that would mark him as one of the most celebrated authors of Arabic prose. Among al-Jāḥiẓ's numerous "epistles" (*rasāʾil*) is one known as the "Refutation of Christians" (*Al-Radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*).[55] This work was likely connected with Caliph al-Mutawakkil's implementation of social restrictions on

53 A.J. Maclean, "Belial, Beliar," in *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1906–1918), 1:146; online: https://www.studylight.org/dictionaries/hdn/b/belial-beliar.html.

54 In addition, Timothy's use of the term *Beliar* indicates that both he and the clergy to whom he was writing knew either the Greek text or the Harklensian, which follows the Greek. For more on Timothy's use of scripture and variant texts see Hurst, "Letters of Timothy," 87–90.

55 For a historical and rhetorical analysis, see Nathan P. Gibson, "Closest in Friendship? Al-Jāḥiẓ' Profile of Christians in Abbasid Society in 'The Refutation of Christians' (*Al-Radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā*)" (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2015), http://hdl.handle.net/1961/cuislandora:28277.

*dhimmī*s starting around the year 850.[56] In the "Refutation," the author takes up both theological and social issues regarding Christians, but his arguments seem directed more to galvanizing his fellow Muslims to end their lenience toward Christians in high social positions than to persuading Christians themselves of their errors. One of his examples is the mishandling of Christian cases by Islamic judges, which provides a counter-perspective to Timothy's earlier statements. We will look at this text in tandem with an analysis of al-Jāḥiẓ's arguments below.

Al-Jāḥiẓ employs a vehement tone to give examples of two types of cases that might be brought before an Islamic judge: (1) Christians retaliating against Muslim offenses and (2) Christians slandering the prophet's mother.

> Many of [the Christians'] well-to-do refuse to hand over the poll-tax (*jizya*), and, despite their wealth, scorn paying it. They insult anyone who insults them and strike those who strike them. And why would they not do this and more, when our judges, or at least the unsophisticated ones,[57] consider the blood of the patriarch or metropolitan or bishop to be equivalent to the blood of Jaʿfar or ʿAlī or al-ʿAbbās or Ḥamza? They think that a Christian who slanders the mother of the prophet (peace be upon him), [claiming she is in] a state of perdition, should only get discretionary punishment (*taʿzīr*)[58] and discipline (*taʾdīb*). Then they justify saying this by the fact that the mother of the prophet (peace be upon him) was not a Muslim. May God exalted be praised! How incredible this statement is, and how obviously jumbled!
>
> [All this, when] by the verdict of the prophet (peace be upon him), they do not sit equal to us, and, by what he said, "If they insult you, then strike them; and if they strike you, then kill them." But when they slander the mother of the prophet (peace be upon him) with [the charge of] indecency, his own community thinks this warrants only discretionary punishment and correction! They claim that their inventing lies against the prophet does not violate the covenant or dissolve the pact. But the prophet (peace be upon him) has commanded them to give us the tax willingly [see Q 9:29], while we are doing them a favor by receiving it

56 Gibson, "Closest in Friendship?" 35–49.

57 Literally, "the masses of them," where "masses" (*ʿāmma*) is the word al-Jāḥiẓ typically uses to disdainfully refer to those who hold uneducated opinions. Alternatively, "their masses" could instead refer to the masses of Christians, meaning that Muslim judges are in agreement with the [uneducated] Christian masses on this point.

58 Rather than the prescribed *ḥadd* punishment.

> from them and making a pact to protect them (*li-dhimmatihim*) rather than shedding their blood. And for them God decreed humiliation and poverty [see Q 2:61–62, 3:110–112].[59]

His discussion of these situations relates integrally to ongoing conversations among jurists; but, as we will show, his opinion of how to handle them is markedly different from most of the jurists' prescriptions.

7 Christians' Retaliation of Muslim Offenses

Al-Jāḥiẓ's reference to retaliation appears to be directly connected to two concepts in Islamic jurisprudence that became the subject of technical discussion: *qiṣāṣ* (equality in punishment) and *diyya* (blood money). The principle of *qiṣāṣ* was that of equal retribution for bodily injury, up to and including a "life for a life." *Diyya* was the more merciful version of *qiṣāṣ*, in which the relatives of a slain person agreed to receive payment of blood money instead of taking the perpetrator's life as retribution. The amount of the *diyya* depended on the sex, status, and religion of the victim. This led to some juristic traditions stating their own hierarchies of victims, listing monetary values for Muslim men, women, children, slaves, and for various categories of *dhimmī*s.[60]

Since the very idea of *dhimma* was one of "protection," it was the responsibility of judges to mete out justice on behalf of any of the *ahl al-dhimma* who came to harm. Jurists stressed this fact repeatedly, even supporting it with prophetic hadiths.[61] In murder cases, the operative questions regarding *dhimmī* plaintiffs were the following: (1) Could the families of *dhimmī* victims demand the life of a Muslim murderer as *qiṣāṣ*, or was retribution in these cases limited to payment of *diyya*? (2) What was the amount of the *diyya* for a slain *dhimmī*?

Complicating the issue was the fact that by the second century of Islam, there were contradictory hadiths about the matter. On the one hand, Muḥammad himself was reported to have upheld his "duty" toward the People of the

59 Al-Jāḥiẓ, "Min kitābihi fī al-radd ʿalā al-Naṣārā," ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, in *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khābakhī, 1979), 302–351, here 317:10–318:15. Author's translation. Al-Jāḥiẓ was certainly aware of the fact that *dhimmī* authorities handled many of the cases in their own communities (see note 13 above). His objection is not to this, but to the way their cases are handled in Islamic courts.

60 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 117–118; Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 55, 58; David Freidenreich, "Christians in Early and Classical Sunnī Law," in *CMR*, 1:99–114, here 106.

61 See, for example, Abū Yūsuf's injunction to the caliph, which includes a prophetic hadith and one from ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (*Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 85–86; compare 39, 47).

Book under his protection by ordering the execution of a Muslim man who had killed one of them.[62] Ibn Masʿūd, one of the Companions of the prophet, allegedly declared, "If anyone has a treaty or protection, his dīya is the same as that of a Muslim."[63] On the other hand, in a hadith recorded by al-Ṣanʿānī (d. 744), Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855), and al-Tirmidhī (d. 892), Muḥammad supposedly said after bringing Mecca under his control:

> The Muslims are united against the others, their lives are equal …, a believer is not to be killed for (the killing of) an unbeliever, and the blood-money of an unbeliever is half that of a Muslim.[64]

Not surprisingly, the conflicting traditions, taken together with pragmatic concerns, led to considerable controversy among legal scholars. Friedmann has thoroughly described the issues involved and the various positions the different *madhāhib*, or legal schools, took.[65]

The position of the proto-Ḥanafīs is clear: *dhimmī*s are entitled to retaliation (*qiṣāṣ*) against Muslims.[66] Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 798),[67] chief *qāḍī* under the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and one of the jurists to whom the Ḥanafī school looked as a founder, nearly caused a public outcry once when he ruled in favor of *qiṣāṣ* for a *dhimmī* killed by a Muslim. Upon advice from the caliph, he was able to prevent the perpetrator's death by requiring the *dhimmī*'s family to prove the dead man had paid the *jizya*, which they could not.[68] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 805), a student of both Abū Ḥanīfa and Abū Yūsuf,[69] wrote the *Kitāb al-Aṣl*, one of two works that would become a standard for the Ḥanafīs.[70] Here he stated that a Muslim is "liable to retaliation for offenses against a Dhimmī, whether for murder or other matters."[71] In

62 Reported by, among others, Yaḥyā ibn Ādam (*Yaḥyā Ben Ādam's Kitāb al-Kharāj*, trans. A. Ben Shemesh, rev. 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 61 [no. 238]); see other references in Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 40 n. 147.

63 Reported by Yaḥyā ibn Ādam in *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 61 [no. 239].

64 Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 40 (see n. 146 for references).

65 Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 39–53; See also Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 114–115, who notes Mālik's exception that a Muslim who lay in wait for a *dhimmī* should be killed.

66 On the legal reasoning behind this, see Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 115–116.

67 See Wheeler, "Abū Yūsuf."

68 Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 42–43.

69 E. Chaumont, "Al-Shaybānī," in *EI2*, 9:392–394, here 392.

70 W. Heffening and J. Schacht, "Ḥanafiyya," in *EI2*, 3:162–164; online http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2703.

71 Al-Shaybānī, *Islamic Law of Nations*, 172–173 [§760–763].

regard to blood money, Fattal records several hadiths that Ḥanafī jurists cited to support their position that the *diyya* of a *dhimmī* was equal to that of a Muslim, including one from ʿAlī: "We have given them the *dhimma*, and they give us the *jizya* to make their blood equal to ours."[72]

By comparison with the Ḥanafīs, the Mālikī and Ḥanbalī schools took intermediate positions,[73] and al-Shāfiʿī maintained that in no situation was a believer to be killed for an unbeliever.[74] Instead, he put the *diyya* for a Jew or Christian at one-third that of a Muslim, and prescribed discretionary punishment (*taʿzīr*) and no more than a year's imprisonment for the offender.[75]

While it is clear that al-Jāḥiẓ does not consider the blood of a Christian to be equal to that of a Muslim, why does he specifically compare Christian hierarchs with Jaʿfar, ʿAlī, al-ʿAbbās, and Ḥamza? These four Muslims represent three generations of early martyrs from the family of Muḥammad.[76] Notwithstanding the high esteem in which their community held them, their blood price would be the same as that of any other free Muslim man. If one were to say, then, that the *diyya* for a *dhimmī* is equal to that of a Muslim, the preposterous ramification would be that one is valuing the life of a Christian the same as that of these foremost Muslim martyrs. The logic is that of *reductio ad absurdum*.[77]

A few lines later, al-Jāḥiẓ mentions a hadith in which Muḥammad specifies that "they" do not sit equal with "us"; and, "If they insult you, then strike them; and if they strike you, then kill them."[78] This is one of the only times he uses hadith in the "Refutation." He does not give an *isnād* (chain of transmission),

72 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 117.

73 See, for example, the views recorded in the law manual of the Mālikī jurist Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr in Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 55–58.

74 Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 45.

75 Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 45, 48; see also D.S. Margoliouth, *The Early Development of Mohammedanism* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1914), 113.

76 Ḥamza ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib (Muḥammad's uncle), Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib and ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (sons of another of Muḥammad's uncles), and the latter's son al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. Three died in battle; ʿAlī was assassinated, and his son Ḥasan fulfilled *qiṣāṣ*. See Robert M. Gleave, "ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib," in *EI3*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_EI3_COM_26324.

77 There may be an additional layer to al-Jāḥiẓ's comparison here: the Church of the East had saint days for commemorating Iraqi Christian hierarchs martyred under the Persians. Could al-Jāḥiẓ be comparing the popularity of these public Christian commemorations with ones for the Muslim martyrs?

78 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4, 318:8–9. Author's translation. The earliest collection in which we have found this hadith is *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ* by Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī (948–1038), no. 5204.

nor mention that the context is ʿAlī speaking to a Jew, not a Christian. More important than the hadith's origins for him, presumably, is that it gives Muslims a different legal status from *dhimmī*s.

One can hardly expect that al-Jāḥiẓ, who expressed disdain for blindly following tradition, would side with the traditionist judges against the *asḥāb al-raʾy* (as the followers of Abū Ḥanīfa were called). In fact, al-Jāḥiẓ's hadith instructor was Abū Yūsuf, according to some accounts, and one of his main patrons was Aḥmad ibn Abī Duʾād, the inquisitor of the traditionist hero Ibn Ḥanbal. On this particular point, though, he buttresses his rational argument with a questionable hadith in order to oppose what may very well have been the majority opinion among Iraqi judges in theory, even if it was rarely put into practice.[79] Al-Jāḥiẓ, not being a jurist, does not share the goals or methods of the jurists. Yet, notwithstanding his hadith citation and the substance of his disagreement with Abū Yūsuf, if one were to place his mode of argument on the spectrum of legal reasoning, it would be opposite the traditionalist views that gave primacy to hadith and closest to the thought of jurists like Abū Yūsuf, who emphasized *raʾy* or reasoned legal opinion.[80] This becomes all the more evident in the remainder of the passage.

8 Christians' Slander of the Prophet's Mother

Next, al-Jāḥiẓ criticizes his fellow Muslims for letting Christians off lightly when they slander the prophet's mother. What is the justification for a mild punishment? That the prophet's mother was not a Muslim, a technicality that supposedly excused the offenders from facing the *ḥadd* punishment of eighty stripes for falsely accusing a Muslim woman of adultery.[81] Two points are at issue here: (1) the applicability of *ḥudūd* (prescribed punishments) and (2) what constitutes a breach of the *dhimmī* covenant.

Al-Jāḥiẓ seems rather uninterested in *ḥadd* definitions, except to the extent that they are used as a justification for lenience toward Christians. Here, the difference between his priorities and those of the jurists becomes quite vis-

79 Judges of the Ḥanafī persuasion seem to have been particularly dominant in Iraq and among the early ʿAbbāsids. See Heffening and Schacht, "Ḥanafiyya."

80 See Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 1–7; and Mathieu Tillier, "Iraq, Islamic Law in," in *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Legal History*, vol. 3, ed. Stanley N. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 304–306, here 305.

81 See al-Jāḥiẓ, "A Risāla of Al-Jāḥiz," trans. J. Finkel, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 47 (1927): 311–334, here 329, n. 54; Carra de Vaux, et al., "Ḥadd"; Y. Linant de Bellefonds, "Ḳadhf," in *EI2*, 4:373; online: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3755.

ible. The latter were concerned with limiting the definition of *ḥadd* crimes and establishing standards of proof that were very difficult to attain to[82]—concerns which, one could argue, not only were the outworking of theoretical principles but also served a stabilizing purpose in society. Al-Jāḥiẓ's guiding consideration, by contrast, is putting Christians in their proper place, for which too-narrow *ḥadd* definitions are useless. Notably, this is the converse of one the reasons Timothy may have been anxious about Christians appearing in Islamic courts—namely, that they might convert to escape the threat of *ḥadd* enforcement.

Rather than focusing on this slander as an offense liable to *ḥadd* punishment under the category of *qadhf*, or false accusation, al-Jāḥiẓ dwells on the contention that such speech against the prophet's mother is a violation of Christians' *dhimmī* pacts. In other words, he implicitly argues that the charge should be one of blasphemy (*shatm*) rather than false accusation (*qadhf*). The offense is one against Muḥammad himself. Christians argue that "inventing lies against the prophet does not violate the covenant or dissolve the pact,"[83] whereas al-Jāḥiẓ thinks it ridiculous to need to specify such terms in a pact because stating such terms is "something inconceivable for [even] ordinary people to do, let alone the illustrious and elite."[84]

The gravity of a charge of blasphemy becomes clear when one considers the juristic discussion surrounding the offense, especially with regard to a person's *dhimmī* status. As Tolan notes, blasphemy became a particular issue for jurists of the eighth and ninth centuries: to insult God or Muḥammad (or for some jurists, Muḥammad's Companions), was a crime equivalent, for some legal scholars, to apostasy (*ridda*) or unbelief (*kufr*), each of which could warrant the death penalty in certain cases.[85]

One example of blasphemy being taken as apostasy is the account in al-Ṭabarī's *History* that Caliph al-Mutawakkil had ʿĪsā ibn Jaʿfar (presumably a Shiʿite) flogged to death and thrown into the Tigris for defaming Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿĀ'isha, and Ḥafṣa; his offense was interpreted as coming out "in opposition against God and His Messenger."[86] Much later, the Ḥanbalī jurist Ibn

82 Carra de Vaux, et al., "Ḥadd" note an exception to this with regard to *qadhf*, or false accusation of adultery; still, that the slandered person be a Muslim was a standard requirement for administering the corresponding *ḥadd* penalty, which was based on Q 24:4: "those who accuse chaste women (*al-muḥṣanāt*)." See Linant de Bellefonds, "Ḳadhf."

83 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4, 318:11–12. Author's translation.

84 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4, 319:14–320:5. Author's translation.

85 John Tolan, "Blasphemy and Protection of the Faith: Legal Perspectives from the Middle Ages," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 27 (2016): 35–50.

86 Joel Kraemer, *The History of al-Ṭabarī, vol. 34* (*Incipient Decline: The Caliphates of al-Wāthiq,*

Qudāma (d. 1223) includes "falsely impugning the honor of the Prophet's mother" as one of the indications of apostasy.[87]

In regard to *dhimmī*s, al-Shāfiʿī (767–820) had apparently found such defamatory statements to be so much of a problem that he specified the following in the *dhimmī* pact that he suggested as a template for future agreements:

> If any one of you speaks improperly of Muḥammad, may God bless and save him, the Book of God, or of His religion, he forfeits the protection (*dhimma*) of God, of the Commander of the Faithful, and of all the Muslims; he has contravened the conditions upon which he was given his safe-conduct.[88]

In general, Mālikīs, Shāfiʿīs, and Ḥanbalīs all stipulated the death penalty for *dhimmī*s who blasphemed, considering it to be a breach of contract.[89] The Shāfiʿī *faqīh* Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Māwardī (d. 1058) listed six conditions of a *dhimmī* contract that must be observed, *whether or not* they are explicitly stated in the document; three of these had to do with defamation against God's scripture, his Messenger, and the Islamic faith.[90] Around the year 785, Mālik ibn Anas himself reportedly advocated death for an Egyptian Christian who cursed the prophet.[91] Two different opinions were apparently passed down from Mālik regarding the punishment of *dhimmī*s who slandered the prophet: both prescribed execution, but one allowed the *dhimmī* to escape by converting to Islam. Müller suggests that it was probably in view of this difference of opinion that Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr held that *dhimmī* pacts should include an explicit clause forbidding public slander of the prophet with Muslims present.[92]

Ḥanafīs were again the exception, leaving the punishment of *dhimmī*s who blasphemed up to judicial discretion and giving a sentence of execution only in exceptional cases.[93] The fact that the death penalty was a possibility, however, marks a contrast between blasphemy and other breaches of covenant for which execution was not sanctioned. For those who failed to pay the *jizya* (poll-tax),

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al-Mutawakkil, and al-Muntaṣir A.D. 841–863/A.H. 227–248) (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989), 135–136 and n. 148.

87 Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion*, 122 and see n. 6.

88 Translation adapted from Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire*, 71–72.

89 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 122.

90 Tolan, "Blasphemy," 42.

91 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 123.

92 Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 41.

93 Fattal, *Le statut légal*, 122.

Abū Yūsuf prescribed imprisonment—not torture or death—despite the fact that *jizya* payment was theoretically the primary prerequisite for receiving protection (*dhimma*).[94] Al-Shaybānī wrote that even *dhimmī*s who violated their covenant by fighting against Muslims were subject only to captivity, rather than execution.[95]

Al-Jāḥiẓ's argument that slandering the prophet's mother constituted a breaking of the *dhimmī* covenant is thus an early attestation of these debates regarding blasphemy law. By all indications, he was writing before any one version of *dhimmī* regulations was accepted as binding on all *dhimmī*s.[96] Moreover, he makes plain that the *dhimmī* contracts to which he is referring did not explicitly state anything about such defamation of the prophet or his family; instead, he has to explain why the rightly-guided imams "did not stipulate that … lies must not be invented against the prophet (peace be upon him) or his mother." He bases his reasoning on the idea that such terms were obviously intended by the parties to the contract and did not need to be stated explicitly.[97]

Here, more than ever, al-Jāḥiẓ's legal reasoning regarding *dhimmī*s is on display. His argumentation depends not primarily on hadiths, but on a chain of logic that flows from a common-sense understanding of agreements and from an invocation of esteem for the first caliphs. Once again, his method, in legal terms, is most comparable to that of the *aṣḥāb al-raʾy* (Abū Ḥanīfa's followers), but is directed against judges who were lenient toward offending *dhimmī*s, like the subscribers to nascent Ḥanafī thought.

94 Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 84–85.

95 Al-Shaybānī, *Islamic Law of Nations*, 219 [§1263–1268].

96 See Levy-Rubin, *Non-Muslims in the Early Islamic Empire*, 60–72 and Gibson, "Closest in Friendship?" 179–180. Al-Jāḥiẓ uses a variety of terms to describe the agreements between Christians and Muslims (*ʿahd*, *ʿaqd*, and *shurūṭ*), but he never explicitly refers to the "Pact of 'Umar" or any other document stipulating terms of *dhimma*. His statements make clear that he knows early Islamic leaders made compacts with those they were conquering, and he lists a few terms that he evidently considers typical of these agreements: "humiliation (*al-dhilla*) and inferior status (*al-ṣaghāra*), paying the poll-tax (*jizya*), sharing churches (*muqāsamat al-kanāʾis*), not aiding one Muslim faction against another, and others like these" (al-Jāḥīẓ, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4, 319:13–14, author's translation). Yet he does not expressly indicate that there is a single covenant governing all Christians; in fact, his references to "imams," "predecessors," and "leaders" in the plural as those who stipulated the terms of protection for *dhimmī*s imply that there are multiple covenants in effect.

97 In this, one can recognize a similarity to the juristic concept of *maʿrūf*—conditions that were known but not stipulated. We are grateful to Christian Müller for this observation.

9 The Nature of al-Jāḥiẓ's Concerns

What is it that so troubles al-Jāḥiẓ about the verdicts of Muslim judges regarding Christians? Why does he consider these situations so concerning? Clearly his objectives are quite different from those of the judges, who must have been keenly aware that their verdicts affected the stability of a carefully balanced multi-religious community. This is clear from the example of Abū Yūsuf above, who ultimately chose to preserve the peace of the community rather than execute his strict sentence. It is also clear from the development in juristic policy that Muslim judges were not bound to take internal *dhimmī* cases and might consult with *dhimmī* authorities before doing so.[98] To overrule the verdict of a Christian or Jewish leader regarding his own community would certainly not ease that group's tensions with the Muslim community, and neither would harshly punishing a *dhimmī* offense for which a lighter punishment could be justified. In the day-to-day affairs that threatened to undo the social order, the *qāḍī* had the power to defuse violence and quell chaos.

Al-Jāḥiẓ, by contrast, saw the current social order as itself being the problem. It may be difficult to imagine that, after a century of ʿAbbāsid rule, Muslim elites felt any threat from non-Muslims in their midst. Yet al-Jāḥiẓ's rhetoric reveals that they did. The entire thrust of the "Refutation's" social critique is to show that Christians were more harmful to the Muslim community than Jews or Zoroastrians, a view contrary to the one popularly held:

> Now we—may God have mercy on you!—do not disagree with the masses concerning how wealthy the Christians are, that they have prominent authority (*mulk qā'im*),[99] that their clothing is cleaner, or that their professions are better. Where we differ, rather, is about the difference between the two forms of unbelief—the two sects [Christianity and Judaism]—regarding the extent of [their] obstinacy and importunity, [their] lying in wait for the people of Islam using every kind of trickery, with vile manners and malicious by nature.[100]

If, as al-Jāḥiẓ claims, contemporary Christians are not the ones Q 5:82 commends as "closest in friendship" to the believers but are instead more dangerous

98 Müller, "Non-Muslims as Part of Islamic Law," 39.

99 Or, "enduring authority"; or, possibly, "a reigning king" (see trans. in Ichoua Sylvain Allouche, "Un traité de polémique christiano-musulmane au IXe siècle," *Hespéris* 26 (1939): 123–155, here 135).

100 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4, 316:15–317:3. Author's translation.

than Jews, who in that passage are "strongest in animosity," then the peril Christians pose to the *umma* (Muslim community) is of the most serious kind.

What is the nature of the trickery, vileness, and malice al-Jāḥiẓ assigns to Christians?[101] First, Christians use the intellectualism for which they are so admired to attack the Qur'ān and to trap weak Muslims.[102] The fact that the majority of the apostates executed for *zandaqa* had Christian parents shows how much confusion Christians have caused by investigating "obscure matters with weak minds."[103] Notwithstanding that the majority of conversions were from Christianity to Islam rather than vice versa, a few apostasies, even if they were lapses by Muslims of Christian background, bespoke an unsettling undulation in the advancing tide of Islam.[104]

Second, wealthy Christians spurn the outward signs of their *dhimmī* status. They ride excellent horses, hire guards, wear fine clothes, hide or neglect to wear their *dhimmī* waistbands (*zunnār*), and even refuse to pay the poll-tax (*jizya*).[105] In other words, they refuse to occupy the place granted to them by the Qur'ān and, at least according to a number of Muslim jurists, by their covenants with Muslims. Such behavior indicated that Christians could not be trusted to willingly submit to Islamic governance.

Third, Christian practices were not only disgusting and impure (thereby threatening to defile the Muslim community as well), but also had the aroma of Manichaeism, which from al-Jāḥiẓ's perspective was a pernicious heresy plaguing the *umma*. Christian asceticism, including fasting from meat, sexual abstinence, and revering ecclesiastical leaders, seemed to have a certain resemblance to the customs of the Manichaean elect.[106] Was this really a group with which Muslims could align themselves as friends?

Returning to the way Muslim judges treated Christians in their courts, what al-Jāḥiẓ saw to be at risk in these situations is probably in keeping with the other

101 On the following points from al-Jāḥiẓ's *Radd*, see the more detailed discussion in Gibson, "Closest in Friendship?" 136–202.

102 Al-Jāḥīẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4, 303, 320.

103 Al-Jāḥīẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4, 315.

104 On the concern about apostasy that was prevalent around this time in Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities, see Simonsohn, "Conversion, Apostasy, and Penance," especially the discussion of Ibn Ḥanbal's response, which made a distinction between apostates who were originally Muslim and those who were reverting to another religion (207–209). Also significant is the admonition in Isho' bar Nūn's law book not to expose those who have returned to Christianity after apostatizing to Islam. See Sachau, *Rechtsbücher*, 172–173 [§ 124]; Simonsohn, "Conversion, Apostasy, and Penance," 209–210.

105 Al-Jāḥīẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4, 317.

106 Al-Jāḥīẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol. 4, 321.

perils he mentioned. In fact, this discussion flows directly from his description of the ways Christians flout their *dhimmī* status. Muslim judges who put the same monetary value on the life of a Christian as on the life of a Muslim merely encourage Christians to continue their defiant ways and to retaliate against Muslim offenses. Those who use a technicality to justify lightly punishing slander of the prophet's mother open the floodgates for the *ahl al-dhimma* to violate the spirit of their covenants with Muslims, keeping only the letter of those agreements. Islam, in his view, cannot retain its superior place in society unless the rulings of Muslim judges keep *dhimmī*s in their place.

The elite status some Christians held only exaggerated the tension between al-Jāḥiẓ and the jurists with whom he took issue. *Dhimmī* personages of influence, by their position, raised the stakes on any legal rulings. While this influence might make judges more careful about handing down incendiary verdicts, it gave al-Jāḥiẓ and the powers behind him all the more reason to try to change this carefully preserved status quo.

10 Conclusion

The perspectives of these two ninth-century figures, Timothy and al-Jāḥiẓ, have shown the landscape of an Islamic judiciary system in which Christians might find themselves to be willing or unwilling litigants, not only in individual cases, but in larger disputes over religious dominance, communal integrity, and rightful authority. Both were concerned about how verdicts involving retaliation, among other things, would affect their communities. From Timothy's view, the threat was that his parishioners might, for the sake of retaliation or other gain, subject themselves to the authority of non-believers. This danger was not just a social one that they would fracture the community, but also a spiritual one: they might compromise or convert for worldly advantages. From al-Jāḥiẓ's perspective, the leniency that Muslim judges afforded Christian plaintiffs and defendants who came to resolve disputes with Muslims was one of the major factors that allowed Christians to continue to disregard their secondary status as protected subjects (*ahl al-dhimma*) and to occupy social positions that rightly belonged only to Muslims. As such, it was a snare on the path toward a social order in which Islam held the unquestioningly superior place. For both Christians and Muslims, then, this judicial landscape posed numerous hazards that required careful navigation for preserving the well-being of their respective communities, and both recognized that the court system would play a role in the long-term trajectory of their pluralistic society.

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CHAPTER 13

The Church and the Mosque in Wisdom's Shade: on the Story of "Alexander and the Hermit Prince"

Mark N. Swanson

1 Introduction: Inter-confessional Wisdom in *Ādāb al-falāsifa*

One of the earliest compilations of wisdom-sayings in the Arabic language is a work entitled *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, "The Aphorisms of the Philosophers,"[1] traditionally attributed to the ninth-century East-Syrian Christian translator, scholar, and apologist Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq.[2] Students of Christian-Muslim intellectual and cultural engagement within the *Dār al-Islām* have long been aware of this work; Fr. Sidney Griffith, whom we honor with this volume, has called attention to its witness to "the view that philosophy provides an intellectual space in which Christians and Muslims could enter a realm of common discourse about reason, ethics and public policy."[3] As Griffith was aware, the traditional attribution to (the Christian) Ḥunayn has been called into question, and credit for its compilation should instead be given to an otherwise unknown Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī; furthermore, the work's known manuscript witnesses were made and preserved by Muslims.[4] Still, the work does contain material said to be transmitted by Ḥunayn and by his son Isḥāq.[5]

1 The printed edition is: Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, *Ādāb al-falasifa*, ikhtaṣarahu Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī (al-Ṣaffāḥ, Kuwayt: Manshūrāt Maʿhad al-makhṭūṭāt al-ʿarabiyya, 1985).

2 On Ḥunayn, see Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala and Barbara Roggema, "Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq," in *CMR*, 1:768–779.

3 Sidney H. Griffith, "Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq and the *Kitāb Ādāb al-falāsifah*: The Pursuit of Wisdom and a Humane Polity in Early Abbasid Baghdad," in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. George A. Kiraz (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2008), 135–160, here 160.

4 See Mohsen Zakeri, "*Ādāb al-falāsifa*: The Persian Content of an Arabic Collection of Aphorisms," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 57 (2004): 173–190, here 175, 186–187 on the question of authorship, and 177 on the known manuscripts.

5 The precise delineation of Ḥunayn's contribution to the work, along with that of his son Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn, is difficult; see Zakeri, "Persian Content."

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2 A Speech by the Young Aristotle

Soundings in *Ādāb al-falāsifa* yield fascinating examples of inter-confessional osmosis. For example, Ḥunayn is claimed as the transmitter of a speech by a youthful Aristotle, said to have been given in public defense of his master Plato's excellence as a teacher.[6] That speech, however, is striking for its monotheistic introduction, examples of Arabic rhymed prose (*sajʿ*), and commendation of virtues that reflect an Islamic spirituality. A few sample passages will illustrate this. The text's Aristotle begins his speech as follows:

لبارينا التقديس والإعظام والجلال والإكرام!
أيّها الأشهاد! العلم موهبة الباري، والحكمة عطية مَن يُعطي ويمنع، ويحطّ ويرفع. التفاضل في الدنيا والتفاخر هما الحكمة الّتي هي روح الحياة ومادّة العقل الربّانيّ العلويّ ...
... والتسبيح والتقديس لمعلّم الصواب ومسبّب الأسباب.

To our Creator be ascriptions of holiness, greatness, majesty, and honor!

O you witnesses! Knowledge is an endowment of the Creator, and wisdom is the gift of the One who gives and who holds back, the One who puts down and who raises up. Preferment and pride in this world are [properly bestowed on the basis of] wisdom, which is the spirit of life and the matter of the supreme lordly intellect ...

... May praise and holiness be ascribed to the Teacher of what is true, the Causer of causes.[7]

The young Aristotle continues (for about two pages of text) by quoting some of the things he learned from Plato. A few of these aphorisms are notable for their rhymes, e.g.:

بالفكر الثاقب
يُدرك الرأي العازب،
وبالتأنّي تُدرك المطالب.

6 *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, 53–55, where the passage begins: "Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq said." See also Zakeri, "Persian Content," 181–183. According to the story, the intended recipient of Plato's teaching had been the king's son, but it was the orphan and servant Aristotle who turned out to be the adept pupil, capable of an eloquent speech when the prince had abjectly failed to demonstrate any learning.

7 *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, 53, lines 7–11. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

بلين الكلمة تدوم المودّة في الصدور،
وبخفض الجناح تتمّ الأمور،
وبسعة الأخلاق يطيب ويكمّل السرور.

Through penetrating thought (*al-fikr al-**thāqib***)
is the elusive vision (*al-ra'y al-**ʿāzib***) grasped,
and through deliberateness are the things that are sought (*al-**maṭālib***) attained.
Through gentleness in speech is the friendship in people's bosoms (*al-**ṣudūr***) preserved,
through accessibility and responsiveness are matters (*al-**umūr***) brought to completion,
through the breadth of morals is happiness (*al-**surūr***) made sweet and whole.[8]

It has been pointed out that nothing in Aristotle's speech is *specifically* Islamic;[9] certainly, arabophone Christians could produce beautiful *sajʿ* and praise God in a way that echoed the "most beautiful names," *al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā*.[10] However, the text's quotation of Ḥunayn quoting Aristotle quoting Plato seems more and more to echo Islamic spiritual teaching when it comes to commend God-wariness (*taqwā*) and patience (*ṣabr*) while warning against hypocrisy (*riyāʾ*), in the context of suspicion of the concerns of this passing world.[11] As August Müller perceptively pointed out nearly a century and a half ago, the Aristotle and Plato that we encounter in this text are portrayed as *ḥanīf*s, "messengers of the true belief in God."[12] But let us pause before this result: taking the text of *Ādāb al-falāsifa* at face value, we are here presented with a Christian scholar (Ḥunayn) who reports on Greek sages (Aristotle and Plato) who are

8 *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, 53, lines 14–16. I have not attempted to reproduce the Arabic word order (or the rhyme!) in the translation.

9 August Müller, "Über einige arabische Sentenzensammlungen," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 31 (1877): 506–528, here 521–522.

10 As is clear from one of the oldest Arabic Christian apologetic texts in our possession, the eighth-century text called *Fī tathlīth Allāh al-wāḥid*; see, e.g., Mark N. Swanson, "Beyond Prooftexting: Approaches to the Qurʾān in Some Early Arabic Christian Apologies," *Muslim World* 88 (1998): 297–319, here 305–308.

11 *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, 54, here lines 10–13. Note aphorisms such as "Preoccupation with what is passing is a waste of the times" (*al-ishtighāl bi-l-fāʾit taḍyīʿ al-awqāt*) or "Desire is the cause of sorrow" (*al-tamannī sabab al-ḥasra*).

12 Müller, "Sentenzensammlungen," 521–523, here 522; Zakeri, "Persian Content," 182.

portrayed as Arabic-speaking monotheists and perhaps even proto-Muslims (if not proto-Sufis)![13] Whether this portrayal is in fact that of Ḥunayn or has been developed by someone claiming Ḥunayn's authority, the "hanifization" of the Greek philosophers is remarkable.

3 An Anecdote: "Alexander and the Hermit Prince"

In this essay I would like to point out another passage from *Ādāb al-falāsafa* that is a witness to what I have called "inter-confessional osmosis." The passage in question is an anecdote about Alexander the Great, which comes just a few pages after the Aristotle-material presented above. I reproduce it here from Badawī's printed edition:[14]

ومرّ الإسكندر بمدينة قد ملكها سبعة ملوك وبادوا. فقال: «هل بقي من نسل الملوك الّذين ملكوا هذه المدينة أحد؟ قالوا: «نعم! رجل واحد.» قال: «فدلّوني عليه.» قالوا: «قد سكن المقابر.»

فدعا به، فأتاه. فقال له: «ما دعاك إلى لزوم المقابر؟» قال: «أردت أن أميّز عِظام عبيدهم من عِظام ملوكهم، فوجدتها سواء.»

قال: «فهل لك أن تتبعني؟ أحيي شرفك وشرف آبائك، إن كانت لك هِمّة.»

قال: «إنّ همّتي لعظيمة.» قال: «وما هي؟» قال: «حياة لا موت معها، وشباب لا هرم بعده، وغنىً لا فقر معه، وسرور بغير مكروه، وصحّة من غير سقم.»

قال: «هذا ما لا تجده عندي.» قال: «فأنا أطلبه ممّن هو عنده.»

فقال: «ما رأيت أحكم من هذا.» ثمّ خرج، فلم يزل في المقابر حتّى مات الإسكندر.

Alexander passed by a city where seven kings once ruled but had perished. He said: "Does there remain anyone from the progeny of the kings who ruled this city?" They said: "Yes! One man." He said: "Point him out to me." They said: "He has made his dwelling place among the tombs."

13 Müller pointed out how this tendency towards Sufism is clear, for example, in lines attributed to Aristotle in al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik's *Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsin al-kalim* (on which, see below), which he finds reminiscent of the chapter headings in al-Qushayrī's *Risāla*; Müller, "Sentenzensammlungen," 523.

14 Arabic text reproduced (with adjustments in punctuation) from *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, 90/14–91/4. It should be noted that Badawī's edition of *Ādāb al-falāsifa* cannot be described as

> So [Alexander] summoned him, and he came to him. [Alexander] said to him: "What has called you to attaching yourself to this place among the tombs?" He said: "I wanted to distinguish the bones of their slaves from the bones of their kings, but I found them the same."
>
> [Alexander] said: "Do you have [the inclination] to follow me? I shall revive your dignity and that of your fathers, if you have the ambition [*himma*]."
>
> [The man] said: "My ambition is truly great." [Alexander] said: "What is it?" [The man] said: "Life unaccompanied by death, youth not followed by decrepitude, wealth unaccompanied by poverty, happiness without anything hateful, health without sickness."
>
> [Alexander] said: "That is something you will not find that I have [to give you]." [The man] said: "Then I shall seek it from the one who has it."
>
> [Alexander] said: "I have not seen a wiser person than this." Then [the man] went out, and continued among the tombs until Alexander died.

In her magisterial *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, Faustina Doufikar-Aerts has indicated the presence of this anecdote (or something very similar to it) in a number of Arabic works, beginning with an unpublished *Qiṣṣat al-Iskandar* by a certain ʿUmāra, composed in the late eighth or early ninth century and preserved in a manuscript in London.[15] According to Doufikar-Aerts, ʿUmāra's version of the story "tells of an old man who has busied himself for fifty years turning over the bones of the dead in order to discover whether a difference exists between the bones of noble and simple men, free men and slaves, blacks and whites."[16] From this, Doufikar-Aerts gives the anecdote the name "The Old Man and the Bones"[17]—although we may note that in *Ādāb al-falāsifa* (and other

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critical; see Zakeri, "Persian Content," 177. See the Appendix for some possible improvements of the text based on the version in *Mukhtār al-ḥikam*.

15 Faustina Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus. A Survey of the Alexander Tradition through Seven Centuries: from Pseudo-Callisthenes to Ṣūrī* (Paris and Leuven: Peeters, 2010), here 35–37. The manuscript is MS London, BL add. 5928, where the *Qiṣṣat al-Iskandar* occupies ff. 2–81 and the story of Alexander and the Hermit Prince is at f. 69a.

16 Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 42.

17 The anecdote may be looked up in the Index of *Alexander Magnus Arabicus* under this title; Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 411. Another instance of the anecdote in which the hermit's age is stressed is found in the "Western-Arabic" *Ḥadīth Dhī l-Qarnayn*, published in: Emilio García Gómez, ed., *Un texto árabe occidental de la Leyenda de Alejandro* (Madrid: Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan, 1929), 39 (of the Arabic text), lines 1–19, with a Spanish translation at 56–57 (of the Spanish text), and commentary at cli–cliv. Here rather than a prince we have an old man (*shaykh*) who has been examining the bones for forty years.

versions to be mentioned below) there is no indication of the hermit prince's age; in fact, it is possible to imagine him as quite young. In this paper, I shall call *Ādāb al-falāsifa*'s version of the story "Alexander and the Hermit Prince."

The sole known manuscript of 'Umāra's *Qiṣṣat al-Iskandar* is of Islamic provenance, as are the manuscripts of *Ādāb al-falāsifa* (in the original Arabic).[18] A clear link to *Christian* readers may be found in another famous compilation of wisdom materials: *Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsin al-kalim* ("The Choicest Maxims and Best Sayings") by al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik,[19] a Fatimid-era scholar in Egypt who wrote the work in 1048–1049 CE.[20] The anecdote of "Alexander and the Hermit Prince" is found in *Mukhtār al-ḥikam* (along with a considerable amount of other material also found in *Ādāb al-falāsifa*), and while al-Mubashshir's version of the anecdote is slightly longer than that of *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, for much of the text there is nearly word-for-word correspondence.[21] This point is significant for the history of transmission of the story, because we know that *Mukhtār al-ḥikam* had late-medieval Christian readers. Coptic scribes included extensive excerpts from *Mukhtār al-ḥikam* alongside specifically Christian theological texts in the fifteenth-century manuscripts Paris, BnF ar. 49 and 309;[22] later witnesses to the acceptance of *Mukhtār al-ḥikam* among Coptic Christians include MS Paris, BnF ar. 310 (17th cent.) and MS Monastery of St. Macarius, hag. 45 (Zanetti 411; ms assembled in 1739).[23] And thus we should not be too surprised when we find the anecdote of Alexander and the Hermit Prince used in a sermon preached by an Arabic-speaking Copt, preserved in a manuscript of the seventeenth century.

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18 For the manuscripts of *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, see Badawī's introduction in *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, 8–10; or Zakeri, "Persian Content," 176–177, with additions to Badawī's list in note 17.

19 Edition: Abū l-Wafā' al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik, *Los Bocados de oro* (*Mujtār al-ḥikam*) [= *Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsin al-kalim*], ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (Madrid: Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos, 1958); "Alexander and the Hermit Prince" is found at 243/13–244/4. The English translation of the title of the work is that of Zakeri, "Persian Content," 175.

20 For al-Mubashshir's biography (and much other information on *Mukhtār al-ḥikam*), see Franz Rosenthal, "Al-Mubashshir ibn Fâtik: Prolegomena to an Abortive Edition," *Oriens* 13–14 (1961): 132–158, here 133.

21 For a comparison of the two texts, see the Appendix. A caveat while speaking of "al-Mubashshir's version of the anecdote" and "that of *Ādāb al-falāsifa*": for now I am limited to dealing with the published editions.

22 Gérard Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes*, Première partie: *Manuscrits chrétiens*, I (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1972), 34–35 (MS 49), 271–273 (MSS 309 and 310). MS 309 has preserved the name of the scribe.

23 Ugo Zanetti, *Les manuscrits de Dair Abû Maqâr*, Cahiers d'Orientalisme XI (Geneva: Patrick Cramer Éditeur, 1986), 62–63.

4 Inter-confessional Wisdom in a Copto-Arabic Sermon

The sermon in question is an Arabic-language composition for the Third Sunday in Lent, from a collection of nine Lenten sermons attributed to St. Shenoute the Archimandrite and preserved in MS Paris, BnF ar. 4761, a seventeenth-century manuscript that was once in the possession of the Monastery of St. Shenoute (the "White Monastery").[24] Despite the attribution to St. Shenoute (the great monastic leader and author in the Coptic language who died at great age in 465), there are no traces of translation from Coptic; rather, the collection is through and through an Arabic composition that fits well into the thought-world of medieval Arabic Christian writing.[25] Making imaginative use of Scripture—but also of extra-biblical materials—the sermons commend the disciplines of Lent (fasting, prayer, and almsgiving) and urgently exhort their hearers to cast off their heedlessness with regard to their eternal salvation, and to repent and seek forgiveness—now, in this life, before it is too late.

The collection as a whole has not yet been published, but the sermon for the Third Sunday in Lent was edited with a French translation by Victor Ghica in 2001.[26] (In the excerpts that follow, I shall follow Ghica's numbering system, which follows the pause markings in the manuscript.) The sermon from its *basmala* (*bism Allāh al-rā'ūf al-raḥīm*) and opening lines betrays its medieval Arabic character (as opposed to being a translation from fifth-century Coptic):

(١) بسم الله الرؤوف الرحيم.
موعظة تُقرا بعد إنجيل القدّاس في الأحد الثالث.

24 MS Paris, BnF 4761; the sermon in question is at ff. 29a–36b. For this entire paragraph, see Mark N. Swanson, "St. Shenoute in Seventeenth-Century Dress: Arabic Christian Preaching in *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761*," *Coptica* 4 (2005): 27–42. I am grateful to Mr. Hany Takla for having provided me with a copy of the manuscript.

25 I have found no precise indication of a date for the composition; just about any time between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries is possible. I am tempted to say fifteenth century because of the manuscripts mentioned above, but this is a guess, plus-or-minus a couple of centuries.

26 Victor Ghica, "Sermon arabe pour le troisième dimanche du Carême, attribué a Chenouté (ms. *Par. ar*. 4761)," *Annales Islamologiques* 35 (2001): 143–161. In what follows I shall refer to Ghica's edition unless there is need to have recourse to the manuscript.

(٢) المجد لله، القديم بلا بداية،
الدائم بلا نهاية،
الواحد بالذات،
المثلَّث بالصفات،
الناطق بكلمته الذاتيّة[27] الأزليّة،
الحيّ بروحه المقدَّسة المُحيية ،
(٣) الخفي بذاتِه[28]،
الظاهر بآياتِه[29]،
الدالّ على قدمه، مُحدَثاتُه[30]،
وعلى ربوبيّته، مُعجزاتُه ...[31]

(1) In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Sermon to be read after the Gospel of the Liturgy for the Third Sunday [of Lent].

(2) Glory be to God—the Eternal without beginning (*bi-lā **bidāya***),
the Everlasting without end (*bi-lā **nihāya***);
One in essence (*bi-l-**dhāt***),
Threefold in attributes (*bi-l-**ṣifāt***):
Speaking through his eternal (*al-**azaliyya***), essential Word,
Living through his life-giving (*al-**muḥyiya***), holy Spirit;
(3) hidden in his essence (*bi-**dhātih***),
manifest in his signs (*bi-**āyātih***);
the demonstration of his eternity: his originated creatures (***muḥdathātuh***),
and of his lordship: his miracles (***muʿjizātuh***) ...

27 MS. Ed.: الدايه.
28 MS. Ed.: بداه.
29 MS. Ed.: باياه.
30 My correction. MS and Ed.: محداته.
31 Ghica, "Sermon," 152 (with corrections on the basis of MS Paris, BnF 4761, f. 29a). Here and in what follows, I have reformatted the text, adding (or removing) *hamza*, *shadda*, occasional *tashkīl* and punctuation, and adding or removing dots (to distinguish *hā'* and *tā' marbūṭa*, or *yā'* and *alif maksūra*), but without changing the skeletal structure of words.

The rhymed introduction continues for a few more *versets*, leading to a doxology.[32] Then (after the *amma ba'd*), the preacher turns to his principal subject matter: sin, its consequences, the reality of judgment, and the urgent need for repentance. He recites the story of humanity's fall in Genesis 3 and wonders: if all these terrible consequences came from *one* act of disobedience, then "Woe upon woe to *us* on account of our negligence (*tahāwun*) in keeping the commandments …"[33] The preacher places his hearers before the judgment seat of God at the Last Judgment, and asks how a sinful person will fare "who departs his world without repentance (*tawba*) to accompany him before God his Lord"?[34] The preacher reaches a climax of pathos with another "how" (*kayfa*) question: "How can it be, this heedlessness (*ghafla*) we are in with regard to the salvation of our souls …?" Life is fleeting; the time for repentance is *now*.[35]

5 A Sermon Illustration: "Alexander and the Hermit Prince"

To illustrate the need to overcome our heedlessness, the preacher tells a story:[36]

(٣٥) لأنّه قيل عن الملك إسكندر إنّه، لمّا كان يملك في الدنيا، مرّ بعسكره على بعض المدن من المدائن، (٣٦) فوجد فيها إمرأة تأمر وتنهى وتحكم. فسأل أهل المدينة، قائلاً: (٣٧) «كيف أنّ إمرأة تحكم في مملكة، وكان فيها سبعة سلاطين إخوة بعضهم مع بعض؟ فما خلّفوا ولا ولد يملك بعدهم؟» (٣٨) فقيل له: «يا ملك، إنّ من جملة السبعة الملوك تخلّف ولد واحد، وهو الآن عامل له مِخدع في بين القبور، وهو مسكنُه دائماً. فأعرضنا عليه المُلك، فأبا، ولم أراد ذلك.»[37]

(35) It has been related about King Alexander that, as he was taking possession of the world, he passed by a certain city with his army (36) and found that a woman was commanding, forbidding, and passing judgment

32 Ghica, "Sermon," 152, nos. 1–9; revised edition and translation of the entire passage in Swanson, "St. Shenoute," 33–34, with discussion of the (medieval) theological idiom of the passage at 35–36.

33 Ghica, "Sermon," 152–153, nos. 10–24 (quotation from no. 22).

34 Ghica, "Sermon," 153, nos. 25–29 (quotation from no. 28).

35 Ghica, "Sermon," 153, nos. 30–34 (quotation from no. 30).

36 The story of Alexander and the Hermit Prince is found in the manuscript at MS Paris BnF 4761, ff. 31a–35b. Again, in what follows I shall refer directly to the manuscript only if there is special need of doing so.

37 Ghica, "Sermon," 153–154.

in it. He questioned the people of the city, saying: (37) "How is it that a woman passes judgment in a kingdom where there [once] were seven sultans, brothers, [ruling it] together? Did they not leave a single son to rule after them?" (38) He was told: "O King, from all of the seven kings there remains behind one son, and he now makes for himself a cell [*mikhdaʿ*] among the tombs, which is his constant dwelling place. We offered him the kingship, but he refused and did not want that."

We immediately recognize the story as the one found in *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, but with embellishments, such as Alexander's shock at finding out that, in the absence of a king, a *woman* was ruling the city.[38] As in *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, Alexander then summons the heir and learns of his strange occupation:

(٣٩) فأمر الملك إسكندر بحضوره بين يدَيه. (٤٠) وقال له: «يا رجل، لماذا أنتَ ساكن في القبور، (٤١) وتدع المملكة الّتي خلّفوها أعمامك وأبيك، (٤٢) وأنتَ ساكن بين القبور وتقاسي أهوال صعبة من الجوع والعطش وحرّ الصيف وبرد الشتاء، (٤٣) وتركتَ التنعُّم الّذي تتمنّاه جميع الخلائق؟» (٤٤) فأجابه ذلك الرجل العابد، قائلاً: (٤٥) «إنّي مشتغل بشغل عظيم في القبور، (٤٦) لو زال عن خاطري[39] لكنتُ أتيتُ[40] بسرعة بغير تهاون وعملتُ مَلكً عوض أبي وأعمامي.» (٤٧) فقال له: «وما الشغل الذي تقول عنه؟» (٤٨) فقال: «يا ملك، ما باميّز عَظم الموتى من عظم أحدا، (٤٩) بل إنّي أوجد عظم السلطان والفقير والعبد والسيّد بالسوية مَثَلَ بعضهم بعضً.»[41]

(39) Then King Alexander commanded that he be brought before him. (40) He said to him: "O man, why do you dwell in the tombs (41) and give up the kingdom that your uncles and father left behind, (42) while you dwell among the tombs and endure difficult terrors of hunger and thirst, the heat of summer and the cold of winter, (43) having aban-

38 On changing attitudes towards women in Coptic and Copto-Arabic literature (with a tendency towards more negative attitudes in the medieval Arabic literature), see Maged S.A. Mikhail, *The Legacy of Demetrius of Alexandria, 189–232 CE: The Form and Function of Hagiography in Late Antique and Islamic Egypt* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2017), 66–69.

39 Ed.: خاطي ;خاطري makes better sense in context. My copy of the manuscript is illegible here.

40 MS. Ed.: ايت.

41 Ghica, "Sermon," 154.

doned the comfortable ease that all creatures desire?" (44) That ascetic [*ʿābid*] answered him, saying: (45) "I am occupied with a great occupation in the tombs. (46) If it were to pass from my mind I would come in a hurry, without negligence, and act as king in place of my father and my uncles." (47) [Alexander] said to him: "What is the occupation about which you speak?" (48) He said: "O King, I do not distinguish a bone belonging to [one of] of the dead from a bone belonging to anyone [else], (49) but I find that a bone belonging to the sultan and one belonging to the poor man, to the slave and to the master, are the same, one resembling another."

Alexander then makes his appeal to the male heir:

(٥٠) فقال له الملك: «اترك[42] هذا العمل البطّال، (٥١) وتعال لأُأجلسك [كذا] على كرسي المَلِك، وأُلبسك الطوق الذهب في عنقك، وأنادي لك بالملك، وتصير تحت أمري وحوزي!»[43]

(50) The King said to him: "Abandon this idle activity, (51) and come so that I may seat you upon the king's throne, clothe you with a golden collar around your neck, and proclaim you as the king; and you shall be under my command and possession!"

However, the ascetic has other ideas:

(٥٢) فقال العابد: «لا خِلافَ فيما تأمر به، (٥٣) لكن إنّني أتمنّا عليك أربعة أشياء، تطلب من الله الّذي أولاك هذا الملك، أن يوهبَهم إليَّ، وأنا أجلس على الكرسي ولا أخالف أمرك أبداً.» (٥٤) فقيل له: «وما هم الأربعة الّذي تريدهم؟» (٥٥) فقال له ذلك العابد: «أريد شبوبيّة بلا كِبَر، (٥٦) وفرح دائماً بغير حزن، وصحّة جسم بلا مرض، وحياة بلا موت.» (٥٧) فلمّا قال ذلك الأربعة أمور، فحصل عند الملك غاية العجب، (٥٨) وقال: «طلبتَ، أيّها الإنسان، ما لا يُستطاع وما لا يُمكن أن يكون! ...[44]

42 MS. Ed.: ارك.

43 Ghica, "Sermon," 154.

44 Ghica, "Sermon," 154.

(52) The ascetic said: "I have no quarrel with what you command of me, (53) but I desire from you four things, that you request them from God, who has entrusted this kingship to you, to give them to me; and I shall sit upon the throne and never disobey your command." (54) It was said to him: "What are the four things that you want?" (55) That ascetic said to him: "I want youth without old age, (56) lasting joy without sadness, bodily health without illness, and life without death." (57) When he said those four matters, great astonishment came over the King, (58) and he said: "You have requested, O human, what is impossible and cannot be!" …

At this point in the sermon, in contrast to the anecdote as found in *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, Alexander goes on at considerable length to explain why the ascetic's request is impossible. We shall return to this below. For now, let us jump ahead so as to complete the frame story:

(٨١) فلمّا سمع الرجل العابد الّذي قدّمنا ذكره هذا الكلام، (٨٢) قال للملك: «يا سيّدي، حيث الأمر كذالك، ولم يوهبْني الله شيءً من الأربعة أشياء المذكورين، (٨٣) دِعْني، يا سيّد، على ما أنا عليه، ساكن في المقابر (٨٤) وأقاسي حرّ الصيف وبرد الشتاء، خوفاً من حرّ جهنّم وبردها ودودها الّذي لا ينام، (٨٥) ونارها الّتي لا تُطْفا، ويمرّوا عليّ الأربعة[45] المطلوبين، وأنا سريّ، خاليّ من أمور المُلك. (٨٦) فإنّ أمور المملكة تُلهّي عن حقوق الله المطلوبة.»

(٨٧) فلمّا سمع الملك كلام ذلك الرجل العابد، صار قلبه ممتلئً بأحزان على ما هو فيه ودَوْرانه في الدنيا. (٨٨) وقال: «إنّي تحتَ القضاء والقدر وحُكم الله مُطاع.»

(٨٩) ثمّ قال لذلك العابد: «امضي، يا رجل، فإنّك من الصالحين.» (٩٠) وأراد أنّ يدفع له شيءً من المال. قال له: «مال أبي وأعمامي تركتُه، ولم آخذ منه شيء. فكيف آخذ منك؟»[46]

(81) And when the ascetic man (who was mentioned earlier) heard this speech, (82) he said to the King: "O my lord, since the matter is thus, and God has not given me any of the four things mentioned, (83) leave me, O lord, as I am, living in the tombs (84) while I suffer the heat of the summer and the cold of the winter, fearing the heat of Hell [*Jahannam*] and its cold, its worms that do not sleep, (85) and its fire that is not

45 MS. Ed.: لاربعه.
46 Ghica, "Sermon," 156.

> extinguished. The four requested things will pass me by, and I will be a person of [true?] nobility, free from the affairs of kingship. (86) For the affairs of the kingdom divert one's attention from the demanded rights of God."
>
> (87) When the King heard the speech of this ascetic man, his heart was filled with sadness on account of his situation [*mā fīhi*] and his going about throughout the world. (88) He said: "I am under *al-qaḍā' wa-l-qadar*, and subjected to the judgment of God."
>
> (89) Then he said to that ascetic: "Go, O man, for you are one of the righteous [*min al-ṣāliḥīn*]." (90) And [Alexander] wanted to pay him some money. [The ascetic] said to him: "I abandoned the wealth of my father and uncles, and did not take anything from him. How should I take [something] from you?"

This passage is quite highly developed in comparison with the corresponding passage in *Ādāb al-falāsifa* or *Mukhtār al-ḥikam*—though this is hardly surprising for a sermon. The ascetic is made explicitly into a servant of God who lives in fear of *Hell*—which he describes in biblical language (Mark 9:47–48). Alexander regrets his own involvement with the world, but responds that he does what he has been preordained to do—a rejoinder known from Alexander's encounter with the Brahmans or *gymnosophistoi* in the *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes,[47] but here expressed in qur'anic language as his being under divine decree and determination, *al-qaḍā' wa-l-qadar*.

The slight expansions on the story of Alexander and the Hermit Prince that we have seen above are, in themselves, quite interesting, especially this "seeping in" of biblical and qur'anic material in the taking-leave scene. And yet, the sermon gives us more: both Alexander and the ascetic deliver major speeches. To those we now turn.

6 First Major Expansion: Alexander Preaches a Homily

The first major expansion in the Alexander story as related in the sermon comes after the ascetic prince has described his great quest: "youth without old age, lasting joy without sadness, bodily health without illness, and life without

47 See Richard Stoneman, *The Greek Alexander Romance* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 133; "It is ordained by Providence above that we shall all be slaves and servants of the divine will."

death." Alexander's response, "You have requested, O human, what is impossible and cannot be," is a fairly close parallel to the corresponding line in *Ādāb al-falāsifa*: "That is something you will not find that I have [to give you]." But the Christian preacher does not stop there; he allows Alexander to take over the preaching:

(٥٧) فلمّا قال ذلك الأربعة أمور، فحصل عند الملك غاية العجب، (٥٨) وقال: «طلبتَ، أيّها الإنسان، ما لا يُستطاع وما لا يُمكن أن يكون!

(٥٩) أمّا قولك «شبوبية بلا كبر»، فإنّ[ـه] لازم عند كثرة الأيام والليالي واستمرارها على الإنسان (٦٠) [أن] يبتدل شعر الإنسان من السواد إلى البياض، وانحنا القامة مع انحناء الرأس، (٦١) وتخلخلت الأسنان، وقَصُرَ الرجلين عن الخطوات، (٦٢) ويصير الجسد محطوم، ولا يمكن أن يكون صَبْوَة بعد الكبر.

(٦٣) وأمّا قولك، «أكون دائماً فرح ولا أحزن»، ليس يصير ذلك لأحد، لأنّ الدنيا أحزانها كثير وفرحها قليل، للخطاة والصدّيقين؛ (٦٤) كقول السيّد داود النبيّ في المزمور، «كثيرة هي أحزان الصدّيقين، ومن جميعها يُخلّصهم الربّ.» (٦٥) والدليل على ذلك آبائنا القدّيسين، إبراهيم وإسحق ويعقوب: قاسوا أحزان وشدائد ومصائب تكِلّ الألسن عن وصفها وذكرها لئلا يطول الكلام ويَمَلّ السامع.

(٦٦) أمّا طلبك «صحّة جسم»، لا يكون ذلك، (٦٧) لأنّ أصحاب العقول قالت: «ثمانية أمور تخصّصت سائر المخلوقين من نطفة أبينا آدم: (٦٨) سروراً وحزناً، واجتماعاً وفُرقتاً [كذا]، وعُسراً ويُسراً، ثمّ سُقماً وعافية.» (٦٩) ولازم عن الأمراض للمخلوقين. (٧٠) ومن جملة ذلك، السيّد أيّوب الصدّيق، وما حصل له من الأمراض الكثير، حتّى أنّه قال: «لا كانت تلك الليلة الّتي وُلدتُ فيها تُعَدُّ من الليالي، (٧١) ولا ذلك اليوم الّذي قالوا إنّي وُلدتُ تّعَدُّ من الأيام. (٧٢) ولو كنتُ سقطتُ من بطن أمّي، كان ذلك هو المُراد، (٧٣) ولا كنتُ أُكابد هذه الأمراض الصعبة الضارّة المُهلكة.» (٧٤) فإذا كان هذا الصدّيق حصل له ذلك الأمراض الصعبة، (٧٥) فكيف تطلب صحّة جسم بلا مرض؟

وأمّا قولك «حياة بلا موت»، (٧٦) فإنّ الموت لازم ودين على كلّ مخلوق، (٧٧) لأنّ الله (سبحانه وتعالى) قال لأبينا آدم عند المعصية بأكل من الشجرة، [و]حكم عليه بالتعب والشقاء والأحزان الكثيرة، (٧٨) ثمّ قال له: «تأكل لُقمتك بعرق جبينك حتّى تعود إلى الأرض

الّذي أُخذتَ منها، لأنّك تراب، وإلى التراب تعود.» (٧٩) فتمّ ذلك وكان. وأيضاً إنّ لقمان الحكيم يقول: «إنّ الله قد أذلّ أهل الدنيا بخَصلتَين، (٨٠) وهم الموت والفقر. لولا الموت، لَما خضع كلُّ جبّار عنيد؛ ولولا الفقر، ما خدمَت الأحرار العبيد.»[48]

(58) And he said: "You have requested, O human, what is impossible and cannot be!"

(59) "As for your saying 'youth [*shubūbiyya*] without old age,' it is inevitable when days and nights become many and continue [to take their toll] on a human being (60) [that] a person's hair changes from black to white; one's frame is bent and the head droops; (61) teeth loosen; legs become incapable of steps; (62) and the body breaks down. There is no youthful passion [*ṣabwa*] after old age.

(63) As for your saying, 'I would always be joyful and not mourn,' that does not happen to anyone, because the world's sorrows are many and its joys are few, for sinners and for the righteous [alike]. (64) As David the Prophet said in the Psalm [34:19], 'Many are the sorrows of the righteous, but the Lord saves them from them all.' (65) The proof of this is our saintly fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: they suffered sorrows, hardships, and calamities that would wear out tongues from describing or mentioning them ([and we will not attempt it] lest speech be long and the hearer be bored)."

(66) As for your request for 'bodily health [without illness],' that cannot be. (67) Those who possessed intellect [*aṣḥāb al-ʿuqūl*] said: 'Eight things characterize all creatures from the seed of our father Adam: (68) happiness and sadness, meeting and separation, difficulty and ease, sickness and vitality.'[49] (69) Illnesses are inevitable for the creatures. (70) From the examples of that, [take the case of] Job the Righteous, and how he suffered from many illnesses, to the point that he said, (71) 'The night I was born should not have been counted among the nights, or that day in which they said I was born counted among the days. (72) If I had miscarried from my mother's womb, that would have been something to be desired, (73) for I would not have had to bear these difficult, damaging, deathly illnesses.' [cf. Job 3:3, 6, 11] (74) If this righteous one experienced such difficult illnesses, (75) how can you ask for bodily health without illness?

48 Ghica, "Sermon," 154–156.

49 I do not know the source of this saying.

> And as for your saying, (76) 'life without death,' death is inevitable and a liability upon every [human] creature, (77) because God (may God be glorified and exalted!) said to our father Adam, at the time of the transgression by eating of the tree—[God] sentenced him to toil, trouble, and many sadnesses, (78) then said to him: 'You shall eat your morsel of bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the earth from which you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you will return.' [Gen 3:19] (79) That was fulfilled and came to be. Also, Luqmān the Wise said: 'God has humbled the people of the world by two traits [*khuṣlatayn*]: (80) death and poverty. Were it not for death, no stubborn tyrant would submit. Were it not for poverty, no free people would serve slaves.'"

In an extraordinary way, Alexander here becomes a preacher who claims the biblical patriarchs as ancestors—"*our* saintly fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"—and who quotes the Bible at length. Towards the end of his speech, Alexander in a sense is allowed to complete the Coptic preacher's treatment of Genesis 3. The preacher had, in his introduction to the sermon, emphasized the terrible consequences of humanity's first disobedience; Alexander now adds an exclamation mark to that, stressing the inevitability of death.

In an interesting final twist, Alexander quotes from Luqmān the Wise—best known from his sayings in Q 31, which bears his name! However, Luqmān was not the sole possession of Muslims; Christians too gathered his sayings, including long passages from al-Mubashshir's *Mukhtār al-ḥikam*.[50] But here we note: just as our Coptic Orthodox preacher is willing to use a story about Alexander the Great (which also circulated among Muslims), so also is he willing to quote a maxim of Luqmān the Wise. In both cases, he is drawing from a well of wisdom materials that Muslims *and* Christians could find to be deeply edifying.[51]

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50 We recall the presence of excerpts from *Mukhtār al-ḥikam* in the fifteenth-century manuscripts Paris, BnF 49 and 309, which were copied by Copts. The Luqmān materials in the latter manuscript (which largely—but not solely—come from *Mukhtār al-ḥikam*) were published over a century ago: L. Leroy, "Vie, preceptes et testament de Lokman (texte arabe, traduction française)," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* 14 (1909): 225–255; the saying on death and poverty is found there at 238/2–4, with French translation at 252/15–17.

51 See Mark N. Swanson, "Common Wisdom: Luqmān the Wise in a Collection of Coptic Orthodox Homilies," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33.3 (2006): 246–252.

7 Second Major Expansion: the Hermit Prince Preaches a Homily

In the Christian preacher's version of the story of "Alexander and the Hermit Prince," it is not only Alexander who gets an additional opportunity to speak. So does the ascetic prince, *after* he refuses Alexander's offer of money. We might have expected that to be the end of the story—but Alexander keeps the encounter going with a question:

(٩١) فقال له الملك: «عرّفْني كيفيّة إقامتك: على أيّ حال؟»

(٩٢) قال له: «عليَّ أربعة أشياء.»

(٩٣) قيل له: «وما هي الأربعة الّذي تقول عنها؟»

(٩٤) قال: «ألأوله، علمتُ أنّ لي ربّاً لا يَدعني بلا رزق، فقنعتُ به. (٩٥) الثانية، علمتُ أنّ لي أجلاً، فأنا منتظره. (٩٦) الثالثة، علمتُ أنّ عليَّ فرضاً أوفيه، فأنا مشتغل به. (٩٧) الرابعة، (قال،) علمتُ أنّ عين الله تراني حيث ما كنتُ، فأستحي أن أفعل ما يكرَهه.»

(٩٨) فلمّا سمع الملك منه ذلك الكلام، صار عنده ندم كثير، بسبب ما هو فيه من الكَدّ والتعب في المُلك. (٩٩) ثمّ أطلقه إلى حال سبيله، وطلب منه الدعاء.[52]

(91) The King said to him: "Inform me about how you live; in what state [*ʿalā ayyi ḥāl*]?"

(92) He said: "Four things are obligatory for me."

(93) It was said to him: "What are these four of which you speak?"

(94) He said: "First, I have learned that I have a Lord who does not leave me without provision [*rizq*], with which I have been content. (95) Second, I have learned that I have a term [*ajal*], for which I am waiting. (96) Third, I have learned that I have a duty [*farḍ*] to fulfill, with which I am occupied. (97) Fourth," he said, "I have learned that the eye of God sees me wherever I am, so that I am ashamed to do anything He finds hateful."

(98) When the King heard that speech from him, he experienced great regret, on account of his involvement in the toil and trouble of kingship. (99) Then he dismissed him to continue in his way [*ilā ḥāl sabīlihi*], and requested prayer from him.

52 Ghica, "Sermon," 156–157.

The ascetic's summary of his way of life is remarkable for a Christian sermon, as the concepts and terminology it employs are characteristic of specifically *Islamic* spiritual writings. While the ideas of contentment with what one has, awareness of the reality of death, obedience to the divine will, and living in the sight of God are certainly not absent from Arabic Christian spiritual texts, the specific terms used here, *rizq*, *ajal*, *farḍ*, are much more central to the Qurʾān and to Islamic piety than to Christian writings.[53] In particular, the notions of *rizq* and *ajal* were important to Islamic discussions about divine predetermination (*al-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*),[54] which sometimes drew careful responses from Christian theologians/apologists. Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, for example, composed *Fī l-aʿmār wa-l-ājāl*, "On Ages and Lifespans," in which he defended Christian understandings of human freedom and responsibility.[55] As for the ascetic's fourth point, it comes close to the definition of *iḥsān* in the well-known "Ḥadīth of Gabriel": that it is "to worship God as though you are seeing Him, and while you see Him not, yet truly He sees you."[56]

8 Wrapping Up

Having concluded his illustration (which, in fact, takes up more than half the sermon), the Coptic preacher briefly turns to application: one is to compare the "deeds of the righteous ones (*al-ṣāliḥīn*) who pleased God by their righteous deeds"—such as the Hermit Prince, whom Alexander had pronounced to be "one of the righteous"—with one's own "heedlessness and negligence" (*ghafla wa-tahāwun*).[57] The preacher then reminds his hearers of the deeds that please God: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving; love for people, perseverance, simplicity,

53 See, for example, the relevant entries in *EI2*: I. Goldziher—W. Montgomery Watt, "Adjal," in *EI2*, 1:204; C.E. Bosworth, "Rizḳ," in *EI2*, 8:567–568; Th.W. Juynboll, "Farḍ," in *EI2*, 2:790.

54 See, e.g., Dmitry V. Frolov, "Freedom and Predestination," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, 6 vols., ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 2:267–271.

55 Edition: Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq, *Fī l-aʿmār wa-l-ājāl*, ed. Samīr Khalīl Samīr (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 2001). See also the brief commentary on the work in Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq," in *CMR*, 1:772–774. Another recently published example of such a text is the 13th-century Coptic theologian Būlus al-Būshī's *Maqāla fī l-ʿamr wa-l-rizq*, "Treatise on Ages and Sustenance;" see Samir Khalil Samir, "Le Traité sur la predestination de Būlus al-Būšī," in *Perspectives on Islamic Culture: Essays in Honour of Emilio G. Platti*, ed. Bert Broeckaert et al. (Leuven and Paris: Peeters, 2013), 127–153.

56 The hadith is the second one in the famous collection *al-Arbaʿūn al-Nawawiyya*; see *An-Nawawi's Forty Hadith*, translated by Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies (Cambridge, UK: The Islamic Texts Society, 1997), 28–33.

57 Ghica, "Sermon," 157, nos. 100–101.

and patience; and especially church attendance, praying for the forgiveness of sins in quiet, fear, and trembling.[58] The preacher makes a point of insisting that this includes women, who are not to talk in church so as to distract the men, a point that he drives home with an exploitation of the Book of Proverbs: the chaste woman is like a golden apple in a jeweled box (cf. Prov 25:11), but an ill-behaved woman is like a golden ring in a pig's snout (cf. Prov 11:22).[59] There follows a brief prayer,[60] and the sermon is done.

The Coptic preacher's *use* of the story of Alexander and the Hermit Prince is rather disappointing: he spends no time on exegeting its many interesting features, but seems to regard the story as just one more example of righteous lives (or, in Alexander's case, a *recognition* of that righteousness) that he can contrast with his own heedless and negligent hearers, who are irregular in their church attendance and who—especially among the women—make too much noise when they *are* present! The preacher's failure to engage the story more deeply may indicate its widespread use, in the way that, even in our own day, a good sermon illustration can be recycled and repeated, even by preachers who do not fully appreciate the illustration's point. Perhaps the story of Alexander and the Hermit Prince was a paraenetic commonplace in the preacher's day.

But if that is so, it is something remarkable. In this sermon illustration we have a story that originally circulated among Muslims, and that has been taken up into Christian preaching. In the process, *both* of the story's main characters have come to quote or allude to Scripture (obvious in the case of Alexander, but we remember the ascetic's allusion to Mark 9:47–48) or to the vocabulary of Islamic spirituality (obvious in the case of the ascetic, but we remember Alexander's claim to be under *al-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*, as well as his quoting from Luqmān the Wise). Overall, though, in the course of this retelling of the story, Alexander takes on the role of Christian preacher; while the Hermit Prince takes on the role of—dare I say it?—Sufi saint. And it is the Sufi saint, in particular, who is commended to the Christian congregation as an example of one who pleases God.

58 Ghica, "Sermon," 157, nos. 102–104.
59 Ghica, "Sermon," 157, nos. 105–110.
60 Ghica, "Sermon," 157, nos. 111–115.

9 Conclusion

The Sermon for the Third Sunday in Lent from MS Paris, BnF 4761 gives us a marvelous example of inter-confessional osmosis, in which not only texts but also concepts and vocabulary have passed between Christians and Muslims, with the result that an anecdote about Alexander the Great that circulated among Muslims became a kind of Christian-Muslim encounter that could be offered to a Coptic Christian congregation for its Lenten edification. At the very least, the sermon bears witness to a body of material that medieval Muslims and Christians could *all* draw upon when seeking to edify the faithful, including stories about Alexander the Great or sayings of Luqmān the Wise.[61]

It is perhaps worth stressing what this Christian sermon is *not*. Although the sermon makes use of a story that had circulated in collections compiled by Muslims, and although additional Islamic concepts and vocabulary have come into it, the sermon cannot be described as an exercise in apologetic. The preacher's use of Islamic materials is by no means a conscious deployment or deliberate strategy carried out in order to win Christians and their doctrines and practices space within the *Dār al-Islām*. Even the opening paragraph of the sermon (see above), with its repetition of old apologetic ideas—i.e., God's Triunity explained as unity in essence and triplicity of attributes—probably for the preacher had no specifically apologetic edge, but was rather a well-digested but still elegant-sounding statement of faith.[62] Rather than *apologetic*, what our sermon gives us is an example of Christian-Muslim *hybridity* or "permeability, interdependence, and convergence," to use expressions from Michael Philip Penn's *Envisioning Islam*.[63]

I will conclude with an image that exploits the title of one of Fr. Sidney Griffith's indispensable books: we have here a special case of "the Church in the shadow of the Mosque."[64] That metaphor, however, suggests straight lines and

61 Furthermore, we may be able to point to one collection in particular, al-Mubashshir's *Mukhtār al-ḥikam*, as one means by which materials like these reached the Coptic Christian community.

62 On the long life of the "attribute-apology" for the doctrine of the Trinity, see Mark N. Swanson, "Are Hypostases Attributes? An Investigation into the Modern Egyptian Christian Appropriation of the Medieval Arabic Apologetic Heritage," *Parole de l'Orient* 16 (1990–1991): 239–250.

63 Michael Philip Penn, *Envisioning Islam: Syriac Christians and the Early Christian World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 186. I am grateful to Alexander Treiger for calling my attention to this important book.

64 Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

a particular directionality, whereas in the example explored in this paper the interaction between Christian and Muslim texts and concepts is more complex: lines of connection are interwoven and influences mutual. Perhaps for the texts that have been explored here we may be allowed to speak of *both* the Church *and* the Mosque in the shadow of a body of common Wisdom, shade that each found refreshing, and in which various forms of exchange and sharing, both deliberate and unconscious, took place.

Appendix: the Story of Alexander and the Hermit Prince in the Printed Editions of *Ādāb al-falāsifa* and *Mukhtār al-ḥikam*

Ādāb al-falāsifa, ed. Badawi, pp. 90–91	*Mukhtār al-ḥikam*, ed. Badawi, pp. 243–244
١ ومرّ الإسكندر بمدينة قد ملكها سبعة ملوك وبادوا. فقال: «هل بقي من نسل الملوك الّذين ملكوا هذه المدينة أحد؟» قالوا: «نعم! رجل واحد.» قال: «فدلّوني عليه.» قالوا: «قد سكن المقابر.»	مرّ الإسكندر بمدينة سبعة ملوك وبادوا. فقال: «هل بقي من نسل الملوك الّذين ملكوا هذه المدينة أحد؟» فقالوا: «نعم! رجل واحد.» قال: «فدلّوني عليه.» قالوا: «قد سكن المقابر.»
٢ فدعا به، فأتاه. فقال له: «ما دعاك إلى لزوم المقابر؟»	فدعا به، فأتاه. فقال: «ما دعاك إلى لزوم المقابر؟ وكيف آثرت ذلك على محاولة شرف آبائك وطلب درجتهم؟» وعرض عليه تمليكه مكان أسلافه. وقال له الرجل: «أيّها الملك الموفّق! أرى لي شغلاً قد شجاني الفراغ منه، ولو قد تصرّم، لملتَ إلى ما أمرتني به.» قال: «وما شغلك في ملازمتك هذه المقابر؟»[65]

65 I am inclined to believe that both eleventh-century collections drew this anecdote from an

(*cont.*)

Ādāb al-falāsifa, ed. Badawi, pp. 90–91	*Mukhtār al-ḥikam*, ed. Badawi, pp. 243–244
قال: «أردت أن أميّز عِظام عبيدهم من عِظام ملوكهم، فوجدتها سواء.»	قال: «أردت أن أميّز عِظام ملوكهم من عِظام عبيدهم، فوجدتها سواء، فاشتبهت عليّ، وأعياني ذلك منها.»
٣ قال: «فهل لك أن تتبعني؟ أحيي شرفك وشرف آبائك، إن كنت لك هِمّة.»	قال الإسكندر: «فهل لك أن تبتغي أن تتبعني، أحي شرفك وشرف آبائك إن كان لك هِمّة؟»
٤ قال: «إنّ همّتي لعظيمة.» قال: «ما هي؟» قال: «حياة لا موت معها، وشباب لا هرم بعده، وغنىً لا فقر معه، وسرور بغير مكروه، وصحّة من غير سقم.»	قال: «إنّ همّتي لعظيمة.» قال: «ما هي؟» قال: «حياة لا موت معه، وشباب لا هرم بعده، وغنىً لا فقر معه، وسرور بغير مكروه، وصحّة من غير سقم.»
٥ قال: «هذا ما لا تجده عندي.» قال: «فأنا أطلبه ممّن هو عنده.»	قال: «هذا ما لا تجده عندي.» قال: «فأنا أطلبه ممّن هو عنده.»

earlier source, and that *Mukhtār al-ḥikam* (as we have it in the published edition) may preserve this earlier version better than *Ādāb al-falāsifa* (again, as we have it in the published edition). The section in par. 2 (from … وكيف آثرت ذلك to هذه المقابر) present here in MH but not in AF may have been omitted in a copy (or the edition) of AF through homeoteleuton. Note that this section parallels nos. 41–47 in the Copto-Arabic sermon.

(*cont.*)

Mukhtār al-ḥikam, ed. Badawi, pp. 243–244	*Ādāb al-falāsifa*, ed. Badawi, pp. 90–91
٦ فقال: «ما رأيت أحكم من هذا.» ثمّ خرج فلم يزل في المقابر حتّى مات الإسكندر.[66]	فقال: «ما رأيت أحكم من هذا.» وتركه، فلم يزل في المقابر حتّى مات.

Translation

	Ādāb al-falāsifa, ed. Badawi, pp. 90–91	*Mukhtār al-ḥikam*, ed. Badawi, pp. 243–244
1	Alexander passed by a city where seven kings once ruled but had perished. He said: "Does there remain anyone from the progeny of the kings who ruled this city?" They said: "Yes! One man." He said: "Point him out to me." They said: "He has made his dwelling place among the tombs."	Alexander passed by a city of seven kings who had perished. He said: "Does there remain anyone from the progeny of the kings who ruled this city?" They said: "Yes! One man." He said: "Point him out to me." They said: "He has made his dwelling place among the tombs."
2	So [Alexander] summoned him, and he came to him. [Alexander] said to him: "What has called you to attaching yourself to this place among the tombs?"	So [Alexander] summoned him, and he came to him. [Alexander] said to him: "What has called you to attaching yourself to this place among the tombs? How is it that you have preferred this to desiring the dignity of your fathers and seeking their station?" And he offered him his kingship, in place of his ancestors.

66 The addition of الإسكندر in AF would appear to be a mistake. MH's "[he] continued among the tombs until he died" makes much more sense than AF's "[he] continued among the tombs until Alexander died."

(*cont.*)

	Ādāb al-falāsifa, ed. Badawi, pp. 90–91	*Mukhtār al-ḥikam*, ed. Badawi, pp. 243–244
		The man said to him: "O fortunate King! I see that I have an occupation, the discharge of which has troubled me. If this were to pass, then I would incline to what you command of me." He said: "And what has occupied you so that you attach yourself to this place among these tombs?"
	He said: "I wanted to distinguish the bones of their slaves from the bones of their kings, but I found them the same."	He said: "I wanted to distinguish the bones of their kings from the bones of their slaves, but I found them the same. They confounded me with their similarity, and that thwarted my efforts [to distinguish them]."
3	[Alexander] said: "Do you have [the inclination] to follow me? I shall revive your dignity and that of your fathers, if you have the ambition [*himma*]."	Alexander said: "Do you have the desire to follow me? I shall revive your dignity and that of your fathers, if you have the ambition [*himma*]."
4	[The man] said: "My ambition is truly great." [Alexander] said: "What is it?" [The man] said: "Life unaccompanied by death, youth not followed by decrepitude, wealth unaccompanied by poverty, happiness without anything hateful, health without sickness."	[The man] said: "My ambition is truly great." [Alexander] said: "What is it?" [The man] said: "Life unaccompanied by death, youth not followed by decrepitude, wealth unaccompanied by poverty, happiness without anything hateful, health without sickness."
5	[Alexander] said: "That is something you will not find that I have [to give you]." [The man] said: "Then I shall seek it from the one who has it."	[Alexander] said: "That is something you will not find that I have [to give you]." [The man] said: "Then I shall seek it from the one who has it."
6	[Alexander] said: "I have not seen a wiser person than this." Then [the man] went out, and continued among the tombs until Alexander died.	[Alexander] said: "I have not seen a wiser person than this." Then [the man] went out, and continued among the tombs until he died.

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CHAPTER 14

Revisiting Cheikho's Assessment of Abū Tammām's Christian Origins

Jennifer Tobkin

1 Introduction

Fr. Louis Cheikho's (1859–1927) contributions to the study of Christian Arabic can hardly be overestimated. Throughout his many books, his goal was to highlight the contributions of Christians to statecraft, the sciences, and the arts in the Arabic-speaking lands in the first approximately nine centuries of Islam, equivalent to the seventh through sixteenth Christian centuries. Cheikho's scholarly career in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries took place during a period of renewed interest in the classical Arabic language and its literary and cultural traditions. It was during this period that many of the books which form the foundations of Arabic literature appeared in printed editions for the first time, and many other books were translated into Arabic. Muslims and Christians from the Arab world, as well as Western Orientalists, participated in these endeavors, which are now regarded as an Arab cultural renaissance. Cheikho's contributions were not limited to the study of Christian Arabic; for example, he edited the *Ḥamāsa* of al-Buḥturī (206/821–284/897), a compilation of excellent excerpts of Arabic poetry written between the fourth and the eighth Christian centuries by poets of various religious backgrounds.[1] Nonetheless, he is best remembered for his works which highlighted the importance of Christians in Arab-Islamic civilization. He founded the journal *Al-Machriq* in 1898. He also wrote *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya* (*Christian Poets*), an encyclopedia which contains an entry for every person to whom an attested line of poetry in Arabic has been attributed and for whom evidence exists that the person adhered to the Christian faith. One volume of *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya* is dedicated to the Christian poets of pre-Islamic times, and the other begins with Christian poets who were contemporaries of Prophet Muḥammad and continues through the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid periods into the late Middle Ages.[2] He repeated this project with several other professions, and at the time

1 Abū ʿUbāda al-Walīd ibn ʿUbayd al-Buḥturī, *Kitāb al-Ḥamāsa*, ed. Lūwīs Shaykhū [Louis Cheikho] (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1910).

2 Lūwīs Shaykhū [Louis Cheikho], *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣraniyya qabla l-Islām* and *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣra-*

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of his death, he had written notes about Christian scribes (*kuttāb*) and government ministers (*wuzarāʾ*) employed by Muslim rulers in the first nine Islamic centuries. Kamīl Ḥushayma compiled and edited these notes and published them in 1987 under the title *Wuzarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya wa-Kuttābuhā fī l-Islām*.[3]

The present study concerns Cheikho's notice about the poet Abū Tammām Ḥabīb ibn Aws al-Ṭāʾī (188/804–231/845) in *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām*.[4] It will argue that, while Cheikho examines the case for and against Abū Tammām's Christian origins, he presents some weak pieces of evidence uncritically and omits some stronger pieces of evidence that can be found in sources that were available to him. Specifically, the claim that Abū Tammām's given name (*ism*) Ḥabīb supports the argument that the poet was born to a Christian family is not compelling. This study will present evidence from medieval biographical dictionaries and other sources to show that the name Ḥabīb was not, as Cheikho reported, uncommon among Muslims in Abū Tammām's time.[5]

Abū Tammām has a towering reputation as a poet; he was one of the most influential poets of the ʿAbbāsid period. Some of the hallmarks of his style, including defining words within a line of poetry, quick-witted wordplay, and original—some would say far-fetched—metaphors[6] are part of what gives the ʿAbbāsid period its reputation as a golden age of Arabic literature. Abū Tammām's originality of language and motif had such a polarizing effect that an oft quoted anecdote goes that Abū Tammām was asked, "Why do you not recite poetry that is understood?" to which the poet replied, "Why do you not understand poetry that is recited?"[7] Suzanne Stetkevych argues that Abū Tammām's poetry is a prime example of the ʿAbbāsid ethos, in which the traditional Arabic art of the ceremonial ode (*qaṣīda*) took on the new purpose of demonstrating logical principles. She shows him to be a master not only of the ornate *badīʿ* style but also of "metapoetry,"[8] in which Abū Tammām dazzles his audience with learned references to philology and to the poetic tradition.[9]

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niyya baʿda l-Islām (reprint eds., Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1967). The works were first published in 1890–1891.

3 Lūwīs Shaykhū [Louis Cheïkho], *Wuzarāʾ al-Naṣraniyya wa-kuttābuhā fī l-Islām*, ed. Kamīl Ḥushayma [Camille Hechaïmé] (Jounieh, Lebanon: Librairie Saint-Paul, 1987).

4 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣraniyya baʿda l-Islām*, 256–260. Later references to Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ* will be to this same volume.

5 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 258, lines 7–8.

6 Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the ʿAbbāsid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 73–74.

7 Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 3.

8 Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 106.

9 Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 27–29.

Abū Tammām is notable not only for the poems he composed, including ceremonial odes on the wars of Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim,[10] but also for his contribution to the study of Arabic poetry, in the form of the *Ḥamāsa*, an anthology of excellent verses of poetry grouped by subject matter.[11] Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsa* was the earliest work to treat the themes of Arabic poetry, and it influenced later, more extensive works on the themes of Arabic poetry, such as al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsa* and the *Kitāb al-Zahra* of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī (254/868–296/909).[12] The impetus behind collections of poetry compiled before the *Ḥamāsa* of Abū Tammām was largely philological, as ancient poems were a source from which grammarians studied the Arabic language. Some of the ancient poetic compilations, such as the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* and the *Aṣmaʿiyyāt*, were simply endeavors to collect notable poems,[13] while *Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shuʿarāʾ* by Ibn Sallām sought to serve as a record of every poet who had demonstrated excellence in poetry, even if he only wrote one excellent line.[14] By contrast, each chapter in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsa* is dedicated to superior lines of poetry about a particular subject or motif; the first section deals with poems about *ḥamāsa* (bravery in battle), hence the book's name. He quoted individual lines and short excerpts out of longer poems so that poets in his own time could use these examples as models when composing their own poetry. The book represents a step toward later books of poetic criticism, such as Ibn Dāwūd's *Kitāb al-Zahra*, which regards poetry first and foremost as a vehicle for expressing ideas, and also represents an early example of the classification of genres in Arabic poetry.

For someone whose poetry attracted so much attention in his lifetime and among later generations, we know very few concrete details about Abū Tammām's life. It is quite certain that he died in Mosul, less than two years after the *wazīr* al-Ḥasan ibn Wahb appointed him postmaster in that city,[15] and the date of his death is variously given as 231/845 and 228/842.[16] He was born in the village of Jāsim, near Damascus, and his birth date is variously given as 188/804,

10 Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 187–202.

11 Willem Raven, "Ibn Dâwûd al-Iṣbahânî and His *Kitâb al-Zahra*" (PhD diss., University of Leiden, 1989), 95–96.

12 Jennifer Tobkin, "Literary Themes of the Poetry of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī in *Kitāb al-Zahra*" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 2011), 6.

13 Ilse Lichtenstädter, "Al-Mufaḍḍal," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam Online*. Originally published in *EI* (first ed.), 6:625.

14 Muḥammad ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī, *Ṭabaqāt Fuḥūl al-Shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir (Jeddah: Dār al-Madanī, 1974).

15 The *barīd* was the government agency of which Abū Tammām was appointed head of the Mosul branch. See D. Sourdel, "Barīd," in *EI2*, 1:1045–1046.

16 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 257, lines 2–4.

190/806, 172/788, and 192/808.[17] He spent some time in Egypt, where he earned a good reputation for his poetic craft.[18] He spent time in Baghdad and traveled to Sāmarrā', Khurāsān, Armenia, and the Jazīra before being appointed to his post in Mosul.[19] The biographical sources name many leaders and statesmen for whom Abū Tammām wrote panegyric *qaṣīda*s, and they devote more attention to this matter than they do to the issue of Abū Tammām's Christian background, which usually receives only cursory mention.

So cursory, in fact, is the discussion of Abū Tammām's possible Christian origins that it usually appears only as a one-sentence comment, even in lengthy biographical notices about him. It usually goes something like, "His father was a Christian named Tadūs, but it was changed and made into Aws,"[20] with no further explanation. The poet's father's name is variously given as Tadūs,[21] Tadhūs,[22] and Tarūs.[23] Cheikho hypothesizes that the versions of the name given in the major biographical dictionaries, all of which had Muslim authors, could be misreadings of the Christian name Taddāwus (Thaddeus) or Tadrus (Theodore).[24] In *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, a book that, as its title suggests, consists entirely of biographical anecdotes about Abū Tammām, the usual one-sentence anecdote about the poet's Christian father appears in the chapter entitled "Reports About Abū Tammām's Faults," which also includes an anecdote in which al-Buḥturī's mother and Abū Tammām live together out of wedlock.[25] Occasionally, the biographers mention the profession of Abū Tammām's father, but on this matter they do not agree: Ṣafadī says that he was an apothecary,[26] while Ibn Khallikān and others list him as a wine-seller.[27]

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17 Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, vol. 11, Thāmir—al-Ḥasan, ed. Shukrī Fayṣal (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1981), 298, lines 1–2.

18 Cheikho, *Shuʿarā'*, 257, lines 13–14.

19 Cheikho, *Shuʿarā'*, 257, lines 15–19.

20 Cheikho, *Shuʿarā'*, 257, lines 6–7.

21 Muḥammad ibn al-Mukarram, known as Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq li-Ibn ʿAsākir*, 30 vols., ed. Rūḥiyya al-Naḥḥās, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Murād, and Muḥammad Muṭīʿ al-Ḥāfiẓ (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1984–1990), 5:178, line 22.

22 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:293, line 3.

23 ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn al-ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq wa-dhikr faḍlihā wa-tasmiyat man ḥallahā min al-amāthil aw ijtāza bi-nawāḥīhā min wāridīhā wa-ahlihā*, 80 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), 12:19.

24 Cheikho, *Shuʿarā'*, 257, lines 6–7.

25 Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Tijārī lil-Ṭibāʿa wa-l-Tawzīʿ wa-l-Nashr, 1960), 51, lines 6–8. After this article was submitted, an English translation of *Akhbār Abī Tammām* was published: Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Ṣūlī, *The Life and Times of Abū Tammām*, ed. and trans. Beatrice Gruendler (New York: New York University Press, 2015).

26 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:293, line 3.

27 Ibn Manẓūr., *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, 5:178, line 21.

2 Cheikho's Notice about Abū Tammām in *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām*

As for Cheikho's biographical notice about Abū Tammām in *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām*, it is devoted in large part to the discussion of whether or not Abū Tammām was actually a Christian. This makes his notice stand out from many of the other entries in *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya* in several ways. Some entries are devoted to little-known figures, about whom Cheikho presents all available information, fragmentary though it may be, regarding their lives and poetry. For example, his entry devoted to ʿAmr ibn Sulaymān, better known as Abū Qābūs, describes the poet's association with Jaʿfar al-Barmakī (d. 187/803), the *wazīr* of the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809), and includes several of his poems in their entirety, as these are not easily found elsewhere.[28] He notes that the name by which the poet is best known, Abū Qābūs, may be a reference to a similarly named Christian king of Ḥīra, highlighting the poet's Christian origins,[29] much as the poet Abū Nuwās, whose father was of Yemeni descent, may have gotten his *kunya* in reference to the Yemeni king Dhū Nuwās.[30] Other entries are devoted to notable Christian writers such as the Coptic philologist al-Asʿad ibn al-ʿAssāl (d. after 650/1252),[31] the translator and physician Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn (d. 298/910–911),[32] and the philosopher and theologian Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī (281–366/893–974).[33] In this case, he expects that the readers are familiar with these men as historical figures and are aware that they were Christians, but he means to highlight that they warrant inclusion in the book because they composed poetry in Arabic, even if it was just a few lines of incidental verse.

Cheikho seems to assume that his readers have heard of Abū Tammām, even claiming that "his *dīwān* is in the possession of everyone."[34] He begins the article with an observation that Cornelius Van Dyck (1818–1895) had claimed that

28 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 241–248.

29 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 241, lines 16–18.

30 Philip F. Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas: A Genius of Poetry* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005), 2.

31 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 359–362. Al-Asʿad's only known poem in Arabic deals with the inheritance laws of the Coptic Church. For al-Asʿad and the other Christian thinkers about to be mentioned, see the appropriate entries in David Thomas et al., eds. *CMR*, here Awad Wadīʿ, "al-Asʿad ibn al-ʿAssāl," in *CMR*, 5:684–689.

32 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 248–250. See Mark N. Swanson, "Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn," in *CMR*, 2:121–124.

33 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 254–256. See Emilio Platti, "Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī," in *CMR*, 2:390–438.

34 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 260, line 1.

Abū Tammām was a Christian, and he expresses his intention to examine this claim.[35] He then summarizes the account of Abū Tammām's life given by the biographers, drawing especially from Ibn Khallikān's biographical dictionary.[36] The next section of his article is devoted to Abū Tammām's religion, and this section consists of five arguments in support of the claim that Abū Tammām was a Christian,[37] followed by additional insights into the matter of the poet's religious beliefs.[38] The article ends with a brief discussion of Abū Tammām's reputation as a poet, including excerpts from two elegies (*rithāʾ*) about him,[39] and then an assessment of the editions of the poet's *dīwān* that were available at the time Cheikho was writing.[40]

Cheikho presents the following five arguments in support of the claim that Abū Tammām was a Christian.

> First, those who mentioned Abū Tammām's father, including al-Ṣūlī and al-Āmidī, agreed that he was a Christian, so his son Ḥabīb must have been born and raised in that religion, and therefore one can say that Abū Tammām was a Christian. Second, his given name (*ism*) is given as Ḥabīb, and it is a common name among Christians but rare among Muslims, which points to his Christianity. Third, his descent from Ṭayyiʾ does not exclude him being a Christian, for we have demonstrated in our book *Christianity and its Literatures Among the Pre-Islamic Arabs* (pp. 121–122, 123–133, 456–457) that Christianity was widespread among the tribe of Ṭayyiʾ, and a large portion of its branches (*buṭūn*) continued to adhere to Christianity for a long time after Islam. Fourth, Abū Tammām's employment in his youth as a weaver and a [water] pourer indicates his low status (*khumūl*) because of his religion. Fifth, none of the transmitters of reports about him explicitly indicate that he renounced his Christian religion.[41]

35 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 256, lines 13–14: "We have in our possession Dr. Van Dyck's copy of al-Tabrīzī's commentary of the *Ḥamāsa*, and it contains [a note] in the Doctor's handwriting that Abū Tammām was a Christian. Where did the Doctor get this [information], and how did he find out that Abū Tammām was a Christian?" Note that Van Dyck is today remembered as a Bible translator rather than as a student of Arabic poetry; see Uta Zeuge-Buberl, "'I Have Left My Heart in Syria': Cornelius Van Dyck and the American Syria Mission," *Cairo Journal of Theology* 2 (2015): 20–28, online at http://journal.etsc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Cairo-Journal-of-Theology-2-2015-Zeuge-Buberl.pdf (Accessed 24 January 2017).

36 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 256–257.

37 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 258, lines 4–16.

38 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 258–259.

39 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 259, lines 22–27.

40 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 260, lines 2–12.

41 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 258, lines 4–16.

Cheikho leaves these arguments without comment. Later in the entry, he cites a line of poetry by Abū Tammām which shows the poet's familiarity with Christian practices. In this line, Abū Tammām describes the Byzantine commander Theophilus fleeing toward the west after his defeat by the Muslim army.

> He so shunned the East
> That those who did not know
> Would think that the prayer direction (*qibla*) of the Christians
> Was the West[42]

Cheikho then also gives evidence that suggests that Abū Tammām was a Muslim, at least for part of his life.

> Nevertheless, his *dīwān* contains several verses that give the impression that he professed Islam. In one instance, he swears by the Kaʿba (*al-bayt al-ḥarām*) and says that he made the pilgrimage to it. In another instance, he mentions the Prophet of the Arabs and the religion of Islam as though they are his prophet and his religion. When he mentions the Byzantines, he refers disdainfully to their polytheism and unbelief and magnifies the Qurʾan. This is what demonstrates that he was a Muslim.[43]

Cheikho, who wrote extensively on Christian Arabs who converted to Islam while employed by Muslim rulers, hypothesizes as to the reasons for Abū Tammām's conversion:

> [W]hen [Abū Tammām] entered the presence of the caliphs, the notable princes, and the great statesmen, he turned away from his religion toward Islam out of flattery or greed for the vanities of this world. We do not say this as a matter of conjecture, for the Honorable Khalīl Mardam Bek has impressed us with his book *Poets of Syria in the Third Century* (pp. 35–37), where he compares Abū Tammām's panegyric to the Sunni caliphs to his praise (*iṭrāʾ*) of the Shīʿa and the ʿAlids (*ʿalawiyya*) and his championing their rights in the caliphate, and he saw a clear contradiction, which he attributed to the difference of time period.[44]

After citing an anecdote reported by Masʿūdī in which Abū Tammām avoids performing the Islamic prayers (*ṣalāt*) and makes excuses when confronted

42 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 259, line 18.
43 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 258, lines 17–20.
44 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 259, lines 21–26.

about it,[45] Cheikho concludes that Abū Tammām was raised in a Christian family and later converted to Islam, but that he was not a pious devotee of either religion.

> Abū Tammām's Islam was superficial, not merely in impudent behavior, as al-Masʿūdī said, but also in belief. Thus, we have mentioned him here among the Christian poets not out of pride about his religion, but rather as a statement of historical fact.[46]

Cheikho gives more specific proof of Abū Tammām's Christian background (by citing a poem showing the poet's familiarity with the Christian direction of prayer) than he does in any of his claims. Cheikho's interpretation of events, namely that Abū Tammām was raised in the Christian religion but converted to Islam, although he was not particularly pious, makes sense for the reasons that Cheikho gives. Medieval Arabic sources that would have been available to Cheikho give additional indications of Abū Tammām's Christian background and conversion to Islam. Some of the evidence in these sources, however, contradicts two of the five assertions about Abū Tammām's Christian origins.

To show that Abū Tammām knew more about Christian rituals than Muslims who had been raised by Muslim parents would know, one needs only to refer to some of the anecdotes cited in Cheikho's own *Wuzarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām*. Here he cites an anecdote in which ʿAlam al-Dīn ibn al-Zunbūr (d. 754/1353), who was appointed to various government positions[47] by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (684/1285–741/1341), is accused of being insincere in his conversion from Christianity to Islam:

> They wrote a formal legal opinion about him to call for witnesses [to attest that he was] a man who claimed [to profess] Islam but in whose house could be found a church, crosses, Christian icons, and pork, and that his wife was a Christian, and he was content with her unbelief, and likewise his daughters and women servants, and that he did not pray or fast, and the like.[48]

The features of Christian practice mentioned in this anecdote, such as the possession of icons and pork, are ones that are outwardly visible and therefore

45 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 259, lines 5–12.
46 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 259, lines 13–14.
47 Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ*, 68, lines 6–15.
48 Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ*, 69, lines 2–4.

easily used as points of disputation and, in anecdotes meant to be unflattering, of derision. Knowing that the direction of prayer in Christian churches is east requires one either to be a learned religious disputationist, which, it appears, Abū Tammām was not, or to have entered churches and received basic religious education in Christianity.

Cheikho argues that the poet converted to Islam, basing his argument on the belief that Abū Tammām was an irreligious man whose primary concern was worldly gain, and he supports this with the anecdote about Abū Tammām's avoidance of *ṣalāt*. Neither Cheikho nor Masʿūdī nor al-Ḥasan ibn Rajāʾ, the eyewitness in the anecdote, takes Abū Tammām's failure to perform the Islamic *ṣalāt* as evidence of his Christianity. If Cheikho had wished to strengthen his claim that Abū Tammām was of Christian origin but converted to Islam out of desire to win favor with the Muslim rulers and notables who employed him, he could have given numerous examples of other Christians employed by Muslim rulers who did exactly that, and he could have contrasted them with other Christians who, when pressured by their Muslim employers to convert to Islam, abandoned their high-ranking government positions and remained in their Christian faith. *Wuzarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām* is replete with examples of both scenarios. Among those who converted to Islam was Shākir ibn ʿAlam al-Dīn ibn al-Baqarī (d. 1487 AD), who served as a *wazīr* under several Mamlūk rulers of Egypt.[49] The latter group includes John of Damascus, who was employed by the Umayyad caliphate but left his position and joined the Mar Saba monastery.[50]

Likewise, the argument about Abū Tammām's personal name (*ism*) is not compelling. Cheikho had advanced the argument that that Abū Tammām's personal name, Ḥabīb, is widespread among Christians but rare among Muslims. This claim is no more scientific than the comments section of a baby name blog. It is very possible that Cheikho met many Christians named Ḥabīb and few Muslims with this name in Lebanon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but this is hardly sufficient evidence for him to infer that the name has had a higher incidence among Christians than Muslims for all time. A brief examination of the sources will show that, in Abū Tammām's time, the name Ḥabīb was hardly rare among Muslims.[51]

49 Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ*, 59.

50 Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ*, 75.

51 If Cheikho had been writing only a few years later, he would not have been able to ignore the existence of the name Ḥabīb among Muslims. At the time of Cheikho's death, a Muslim man named Habib Bourguiba, who would later lead the movement for Tunisian independence and become president of the independent Tunisia, was a law student in Paris.

3 The Use of the Personal Name Ḥabīb in Abū Tammām's Time

1	أَيُّ شَيْءٍ يَكونُ أَمْلَحَ مِن صَـ	ـبٍّ أَديبٍ مُتَيَّمٍ بِأَديبِ
2	جازَ حُكْمي في قَلْبِهِ وهَواهُ	بَعْدَما جازَ حُكْمُهُ في القُلوبِ
3	كادَ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ الهَوى بَيْنَ عَيْنَيهِ	كِتاباً هَذا حَبيبُ حَبيبِ
4	غَيْرَ أَنّي لَو كُنْتُ أَعْشَقُ نَفْسي	لَتَنَغَّصْتُ عِشْقَها بالرَقيبِ[52]

1 What could be
More beautiful
Than one man of letters passionately in love
With another?

2 I have gained dominion
Over his heart and his love
Since he first gained dominion
Over mine

3 He almost wrote our love
Between his eyes
With the words:
This is Ḥabīb's beloved

4 Except that, if I were in love
With my own soul,
I would fear lest a slanderer
Find out about my love for it[53]

poem by ABŪ TAMMĀM ḤABĪB IBN AWS AL-ṬĀ'Ī

Before exploring the evidence concerning the prevalence of the personal name Ḥabīb in Abū Tammām's time, it is worth mentioning in general terms that naming practices change over time; this should be obvious to scholars of Classical Arabic who have also lived in the Arab world or interacted in contemporary Arab society enough to be familiar with its current naming trends. Consider that some names that were male personal names in the Middle Ages are now

52 Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Abī Sulaimān al-Iṣfahānī Ibn Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Zahra*, ed. A.R. Nykl and Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān ([Chicago: University of Chicago Press], 1932), 60, lines 2–5.

53 English translation in Tobkin, *Literary Themes*, 99.

female names, and vice versa. For example, *Risālat al-Ghufrān* by Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (973–1057 AD) mentions a woman named Tawfīq.[54] By the late nineteenth century, the name Tawfīq was a popular name for boys, a notable example being the playwright Tawfīq al-Ḥakīm (1898–1987 AD). Likewise, the shadow play *Ṭāyf al-Khayāl* by Ibn Dāniyāl (d. 710/1310)[55] revolves around a male character named Wiṣāl for whom a matchmaker chooses an unsuitable bride.[56] By the late twentieth century, the name Wiṣāl was in use as a female name in several Arab countries; one example is Wisal Farha Bakdash, a leader of the Bakdash faction of the Syrian Communist Party. Ibn Dāniyāl's audience would not have thought of Wiṣāl as a feminine-sounding name, although Irwin posits that, as among the meanings of the Arabic word *wiṣāl* is "a tryst" or "an amorous relationship,"[57] they may have heard it as a sexual innuendo, especially in the context of the ribald humor of Ibn Dāniyāl's shadow plays.[58]

It is true that, today, some Arabic names are strongly associated with one or another religion, but it is a mistake not to take into account that these naming trends also change over time. Some personal names which today are used almost exclusively by Muslims were also used by Christians in the Middle Ages. Since Cheikho so extensively documented the history of Christians in the early centuries of Islam, compiling, as he did, several books on notable medieval Arab Christian individuals, it is almost surprising that he made the faulty assumption that the name Ḥabīb had always been used almost exclusively by Christians. Even some names which have religious significance in Islam were also the names of Christians in the first centuries of Islamic history. Cheikho's own *Wuzarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya wa-Kuttābuhā fī l-Islām* includes mention of Christian *wazīr*s named ʿAbdullāh,[59] ʿAbd al-Ghanī,[60] ʿAbd al-Razzāq,[61] and ʿUthmān.[62] In *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya*, he esteems the Christian poet Marquṣ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭāʾī, who was a contemporary of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.[63]

54 Robert Irwin, *Night & Horses & the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1999), 237–243.

55 Everett K. Rowson, "Two Homoerotic Narratives from Mamlūk Literature," in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, ed. J.W. Wright and Everett K. Rowson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 161.

56 Irwin, *Night & Horses & the Desert*, 359–360.

57 Irwin, *Night & Horses & the Desert*, 360.

58 Rowson, "Two Homoerotic Narratives," 172–183.

59 Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ*, 182–188.

60 Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ*, 180.

61 Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ*, 179–180.

62 Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ*, 193.

63 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 136–137.

Another example of a Christian whose given name is today almost exclusively used by Muslims is Ḥasan ibn Bahlūl (10th century AD), who is known for compiling a Syriac-Arabic dictionary. Compiling bilingual dictionaries of liturgical languages such as Syriac and Coptic during the era in which these were being replaced by Arabic as the spoken idiom was an important phenomenon in the history of Christian Arabic; consider also the efforts undertaken by Christians in 13th century Egypt to preserve the Coptic language.[64]

A factor that makes it more difficult to study naming trends among Arab Christians in the Middle Ages is the phenomenon that many Christians were known by one name in Arabic but took another name at baptism or upon entering religious life. The above mentioned Marquṣ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭāʾī is one such example; according to Cheikho, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was the poet's given name, and Marquṣ was his baptismal name.[65] Even more famous examples include John of Damascus (655–749 AD), whose Arabic name was Manṣūr ibn Sarjūn,[66] and Eutychius of Alexandria (877–940 AD), whose Arabic name was Saʿīd ibn al-Biṭrīq. The former, a famous Christian theologian and apologist, was named Manṣūr after his grandfather; it is a testament to the non-sectarian nature of most Arabic names in the early Islamic centuries that this was the same name taken as a throne name by the ʿAbbāsid caliph in 136/754.

To test the claim that the personal name Ḥabīb was common among Christians and uncommon among Muslims for the period in which Abū Tammām lived, we examined several Arabic biographical dictionaries compiled during or before the seventh Islamic century (thirteenth century AD) as well as two of Cheikho's encyclopedic works. Biographical dictionaries were the sources of choice because they contain the personal names of many individuals, the name of each notable person who is the subject of an entry, as well as names of that person's ancestors, sometimes going back many generations. We took note of individuals named Ḥabīb who lived during the first three Islamic centuries; that is, they were born no more than 200 years before and no more than 130 years after Abū Tammām. We made certain to include some biographical dictionaries that focus on Syria, Abū Tammām's country of origin. The sources examined were the following:

64 See, for example, Adel Y. Sidarus, "Coptic Lexicography in the Middle Ages: The Coptic Arabic Scalae," in *The Future of Coptic Studies*, ed. R.McL. Wilson (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 125–142.

65 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 136, lines 8–11.

66 Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ*, 75.

1. *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* by Ibn al-ʿAsākir (499/1106–571/1177)
2. *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān wa-Anbāʾ Abnāʾ al-Zamān* by Ibn Khallikān[67] (608/1211–681/1282)
3. *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt* by al-Ṣafadī (695/1296)
4. *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq* by Ibn Manẓūr (630/1232–711/1311)
5. *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām* by Louis Cheikho
6. *Wuzarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya wa-Kuttābuhā fī l-Islām* by Louis Cheikho.

With the exception of Cheikho, all of the compilers of the sources studied were Muslims. It warrants mention that the Arabic biographical dictionary as a literary form has its roots in the Islamic religious sciences. Some of the earliest Arabic books that can be considered biographical dictionaries were of the *ṭabaqāt al-rijāl* genre; that is, they were collections of biographical notices of the individuals whose names appear in the chain of transmitters (*isnād*) of *ḥadīth*s.[68] Even biographical dictionaries the scope of which went far beyond identifying *ḥadīth* transmitters still often have a sectarian bent, the individuals mentioned in them belonging disproportionately to same the *madhhab* (juridical tradition) as the compiler. For example, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, compiler of *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, belonged to the Shāfiʿite school of jurisprudence and paid attention disproportionately to his fellow Shāfiʿites, devoting entries of considerable length to otherwise obscure Shāfiʿites such as Abū l-ʿAbbās ibn Surayj.[69] From reading *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, one could easily be left with the impression that Ibn Surayj was of greater historical significance than his opponent in disputation, the Ẓāhirite Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, despite the fact that the latter served as chief *qāḍī* of the Ẓāhirite school (in which capacity he issued a *fatwa* that played a role in the condemnation of the Ṣūfī al-Ḥallāj), compiled an anthology of poetry, *Kitāb al-Zahra*, which was influenced by the literary critical spirit of Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsa*,[70] and is mentioned in numerous later *adab* works, where he is counted among the martyrs of love, to say nothing of his talents as a poet. Because of the sectarian bias in biographical dictionaries, it was important to include works dedicated to the biography of Christians as well as those dedicated to the biography of Muslims, and Cheikho's works, although they were compiled in modern times, were the most accessible encyclopedias in Arabic devoted to the biography of Arabic-speaking Christians.

67 Abū al-ʿAbbās Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Abū Bakr Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān wa-Anbāʾ Abnāʾ al-Zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1968–1977).

68 Claude Gilliot, "Ṭabaḳāt," in *EI2*, 10:7–10.

69 Tobkin, *Literary Themes*, 11.

70 Raven, "Ibn Dâwûd al-Iṣbahânî and His *Kitâb al-Zahra*," 95–97.

The search yielded mention of 25 individuals known by the personal name Ḥabīb. (For a summary chart, see the Appendix to this chapter.) Of the 25 individuals, 19 can be said with certainty to have been Muslims. Of the other six, one is Abū Tammām himself, three, Ḥabīb ibn Qulayʿ al-Madanī,[71] Ḥabīb ibn Murra al-Murrī,[72] and Ḥabīb ibn Yaḥyā al-Umawī,[73] are mentioned only in passing, such that it is not possible to know any information at all about them, and two are mentioned only as ancestors in the genealogies of Christian poets. One of these was Ḥabīb ibn Qays ibn ʿAmr, the grandfather of Aʿshā of the Banū Abī Rabīʿa.[74] Cheikho says that the Banū Rabīʿa practiced Christianity during the Umayyad period, al-Aʿshā's time, but he does not indicate when the tribe embraced Christianity,[75] and we cannot even conclude with certainty that, if some of the Banū Rabīʿa practiced Christianity two generations before al-Aʿshā, his grandfather was one of them. The other was Ḥabīb ibn ʿAmr ibn Ghanm, a distant ancestor of the Umayyad poets ʿUmayr al-Qaṭāmī al-Taghlibī[76] and Kaʿb ibn Juʿayl.[77]

As for the Muslims with the name Ḥabīb who appear in the biographical sources, their inclusion in the biographical dictionaries is often for reasons directly related to their practice of Islam. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ḥabīb ibn Maslama al-Qurashī (d. 42/662) served as governor of al-Jazīra under ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and was known as "Ḥabīb al-Rūm" ("Ḥabīb of the Romans") because of his *jihād* against the Byzantine Empire.[78] Ṣafadī includes six individuals, Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit Qays ibn Dīnār of Kufa,[79] Ḥabīb ibn al-Zubayr al-Iṣbahānī of Basra,[80] Abū Marzūq Ḥabīb ibn al-Shahīd of Basra[81] (whom Ibn ʿAsākir also describes as a legal scholar (*faqīh*) and says that he used to make legal judgments (*yuftī*)),[82] Abū Tammām's contemporary and fellow tribesman Ḥabīb ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Ṭāʾī (d. 247/861) of Ḥimṣ,[83] the ascetic Abū Muḥammad Ḥabīb al-ʿAjamī of Basra (d. 140/758),[84] and Ḥabīb ibn Abī Faḍāla

71 Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, 12:185.
72 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:61–62.
73 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:83.
74 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 129, line 5.
75 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 129, lines 6–7.
76 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 192, line 1.
77 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 203, lines 12–13.
78 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:290.
79 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:290–291.
80 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:291.
81 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:291–292.
82 Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, 5:184.
83 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:299.
84 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:299.

al-Mālikī,[85] by virtue of their role in the transmission of *ḥadīth*s; ibn Abī Faḍāla was a *tābiʿ* who recited *ḥadīth*s on the authority of Anas ibn Mālik. Abū Muḥammad Ḥabīb ibn Abī Ḥabīb Marzūq al-Madanī, also a *muḥaddith*, meets Ṣafadī's criteria for inclusion not only because of his transmission of *ḥadīth*s but also because of his role as a scribe (*kātib*) for Mālik;[86] the fact that he transmitted enough *ḥadīth*s for Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal to have given an assessment, albeit a negative one, of his trustworthiness as a *muḥaddith* is strong evidence that he was a Muslim.

Ibn ʿAsākir mentions four *ḥadīth* transmitters not mentioned by Ṣafadī, namely Ḥabīb ibn Abī Ḥabīb of Damascus,[87] Ḥabīb al-Aʿwar,[88] Ḥabīb ibn ʿUmar al-Anṣārī,[89] and Ḥabīb ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Khawlānī.[90] All of these men seem to be quite obscure figures, as Ibn ʿAsākir gives few details about them, saying little or nothing about where and when they lived. He mentioned two other otherwise obscure men named Ḥabīb in contexts that identify them clearly as Muslims. One is Ḥabīb ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb, whose entry consists of a single anecdote concerning a conversation about Islamic practice which took place during a trip to Makka.[91] The other is Ḥabīb al-Muʾadhdhin, who used to recite the Islamic call to prayer (*adhān*) in the Ibn Abī al-Khalīl mosque.[92] Included in Ibn ʿAsākir's full *Taʾrīkh Dimashq* but not in Ibn Manẓūr's epitome of it are several men called Ḥabīb who are included because of their deeds in wars in which they fought on the side of the Muslims. Ḥabīb ibn Abī ʿUbayda (d. 124/741) waged war against *khawārij* in North Africa.[93] Ḥabīb ibn Kurra carried the Umayyad flag in battle.[94] Ḥabīb ibn ʿUbayd is mentioned as taking part in Abū Bakr's military campaigns and in an Islamic funeral prayer.[95] Ibn ʿAsākir also mentions Ḥabīb ibn Maslama, a *muḥaddith* who recited *ḥadīth*s on the authority of his similarly named great-grandfather.[96] Meanwhile, he includes Ḥabīb ibn Naṣr ibn Muḥammad on the grounds that he was a Muslim judge (*qāḍī*).[97]

85 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:292.
86 Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, 11:292.
87 Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, 5:182–183.
88 Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, 5:192–193.
89 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:42–43.
90 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:40.
91 Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, 5:184–185.
92 Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, 5:193.
93 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:42.
94 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:44–45.
95 Ibn ʿAsākir *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:42.
96 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:81–82.
97 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:82.

Abū Tammām is the only person named Ḥabīb to have an entry devoted to him in Ibn Khallikān's biographical dictionary.[98] He is also the only Ḥabīb to be the subject of an entry in Cheikho's *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām*. Of the 406 ministers and scribes who receive notice in Cheikho's *Wuzarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya wa-Kuttābuhā fī l-Islām*, none is named Ḥabīb.

Thus, the sources do not support Cheikho's claim that the name Ḥabīb is rare among Arabic-speaking Muslims. They also do not indicate that it was especially prevalent among Arabic-speaking Christians in Abū Tammām's time. In the sources examined for this study, Abū Tammām is the only person named Ḥabīb explicitly associated with Christianity. The other times Cheikho mentions the name Ḥabīb, it is among the names of ancestors mentioned in the genealogy of Christian poets, in which case it is not possible to tell during which generation the family embraced Christianity.

4 Other Evidence for Abū Tammām's Christian or Muslim Religion

Abū Tammām's personal name Ḥabīb does not strongly indicate that he was a Christian, nor does it strongly indicate that he was not, and other biographical details about him make for seemingly inconclusive evidence. His two relatives mentioned in Ṣūlī's *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, his son Tammām and his brother Sahm,[99] also have perfectly non-sectarian personal names. Cheikho lists among the evidence for Abū Tammām's Christianity his descent from the Ṭāʾite tribe, and indeed some of the Christians who receive notices in *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām* and who lived during the first three Islamic centuries were Ṭāʾites.[100] Some of the Ṭāʾites in Abū Tammām's time were Christians, while others, including the poet al-Buḥturī, were Muslims.

As delightful as it would be for scholars of Arabic to read an account of Abū Tammām's conversion from Christianity to Islam or an account of his life and death as an adherent of one religion or the other, no such account exists, and we, like Cheikho before us, as well as Ibn Khallikān and Ṣafadī before him, are left to read between the lines. The sources simply do not prove one way or another whether Abū Tammām was ever an adherent of the Christian faith and whether he converted to Islam. If pressed to make a judgment about Abū Tammām's religious affiliation, we would agree with Cheikho that Abū Tammām was born into a Christian family and that he converted to Islam, but we would

98 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, 2:11–26.

99 Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, 55.

100 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 37–41, 65–91, 136–137.

take as the most compelling piece of evidence something that Cheikho did not mention. Biographical notices of learned Muslims (and we can consider Abū Tammām a learned person by virtue of his having studied poetry extensively enough to compile the *Ḥamāsa*) often mention that the subject studied and memorized the Qur'an in his childhood—and none of the biographical entries on Abū Tammām says this. If they say anything about his childhood, they mention his Christian father. By contrast, Abū Nuwās, who has it in common with Abū Tammām that all of his noteworthy accomplishments involve poetry, and who like Abū Tammām was not very devoted to religious practice, is clearly said to have studied the Qur'an as a child.[101] This points to Abū Tammām having had a Christian upbringing, especially since, as Cheikho mentions, all of the sources that say anything about his ancestral faith say that it was Christianity, and none say that it was Islam.

Meanwhile, biographical notices of Muslims also frequently include names of people on whose authority the subject recited *ḥadīth*s and people who transmitted *ḥadīth*s on the subject's authority. Ibn ʿAsākir mentions the *ḥadīth*s Abū Tammām transmitted, and although there are only two,[102] the fact that he recited any *ḥadīth*s at all and that anyone took his recitation of them seriously enough to mention them in a biographical dictionary indicates that he was a Muslim during his adult life. This indicates that, at some time in his life, Abū Tammām was an adherent of the Islamic religion.

5 The Poetic Tradition Further Complicates Matters

It is easier to understand the ambiguous picture of Abū Tammām presented in the anecdotes if we consider in general how Arab poets portrayed themselves in their poetry and how biographical sources tended to portray them. Classical Arabic poetry was not autobiographical in today's sense, when modern poets may write directly and in detail about their own experiences. In the ʿAbbāsid period, the entire corpus of poetry dealt with what appears, to modern readers, to be a very limited set of themes. While Abū Tammām famously pushed the boundaries and broke new ground as far as the sort of allusions and wordplay he used in his poetry,[103] his poetry gives us no details about his conversion. Each Arab poet wrote as a fictionalized version of his himself, creating a fictional persona that, while memorable, confounds efforts to

101 Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas*, 3.

102 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, 12:16–17.

103 Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 106.

know much historical truth about the poet. Gruendler says that Arabic poems of the ʿAbbāsid period often resemble other poems more than they resemble real life.[104] Likewise, biographical anecdotes about poets often seem to build on the image created by the poet in his poetry.[105] Even the anecdotes about Abū Tammām's avoidance of prayer[106] seem to make Abū Tammām conform to the image of the irreligious poet. The irreverent poet archetype has a long history in the Arabic poetic canon. Poets from before Abū Tammām's time who were known for their irreverent behavior include Wāliba ibn Ḥubāb (d. 170/786)[107] and the *mukhaḍram* poet Abū Miḥjan ibn Ḥabīb al-Thaqafī,[108] both of whom praised the Devil in their poetry. The name of Abū Nuwās is virtually synonymous with ribald poetry in Arabic; borrowing the praise of the Devil motif from his teacher Wāliba is the least of the indiscretions one finds mentioned in the *dīwān* of Abū Nuwās, and in fact his reputation as a mischief maker extends so far beyond his poetry and into spurious anecdotes that he appears as a mischievous character in contexts as disparate as the *Thousand and One Nights* and Swahili folklore.[109] Even Abū Tammām's fellow Ṭā'ite al-Buḥturī had a reputation for being unscrupulous. In fact, wanton poets are so easy to find in the Arabic poetic tradition that pious poets like Abū al-ʿAtāhiya stand out by contrast.

While the irreverent poet archetype helps us understand Abū Tammām's reputation for irreligiosity, the outsider poet archetype may also explain why the brief statement about Abū Tammām's Christian father is repeated so often in the anecdotes, narrated as it is with inconsistent details. Poets who present themselves, or whom biographers present, as rogues who are of humble origins and who live by their wits also have a long history in the Arabic poetic tradition. Even in pre-Islamic times, the *saʿālīq* poets, such as al-Shanfarā al-Azdī (d. 70 BH/525 AD) and Ta'abbaṭa Sharran (d. 65 BH/530 AD), courted a bad reputation through their poetry and behavior.[110] The latter's name means "he carries evil under his arm," the "evil" referring to a sword,[111] but if he had not

104 Beatrice Gruendler, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry: Ibn al-Rūmī and the Patron's Redemption* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 5–6.

105 Abdelfattah Kilito, *The Author and his Doubles*, trans. Michael Cooperson (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 25–31.

106 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya*, 259, lines 5–11.

107 Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas*, 3.

108 N. Rhodokanakis and Ch. Pellat, "Abū Miḥdjan," in *EI2*, 1:140. Abū Miḥjan converted to Islam, but no information seems to be available about the religion of his father Ḥabīb.

109 Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas*, 26–28.

110 Irwin, *Night & Horses & the Desert*, 18–24.

111 Irwin, *Night & Horses & the Desert*, 18–19.

wanted to be known as a rebellious outsider, he could have used any of numerous other words to refer to the sword. Anecdotes about Abū Nuwās have his father abandoning his family and his mother selling him into slavery as a child; the biographical tradition also contains vulgar anecdotes about Wāliba taking a sexual interest in the young Abū Nuwās.[112] In the biographical tradition, Abū Nuwās relies entirely on his wits and poetic skill to go from being enslaved and sexually exploited as a youth to being a close friend of the Caliph al-Amīn (d. 197/813).[113] We can read the biography of Abū Tammām as a similar, if less extreme, story of a boy of humble origins who made such a great name for himself as a poet that he earned the favor of caliphs. This story goes that Abū Tammām was the son of a Christian wine-seller. He went to Egypt, where he performed the lowly job of being a water-pourer in a mosque; travelled around in Syria; and eventually earned such a reputation as a poet that the Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim invited him to his court at Baghdad.[114] The stories of Abū Nuwās and Abū Tammām are examples of how, in the ʿAbbāsid period, it was possible to gain a reputation based on skill in the Arabic language rather than on pedigree.

Abū Tammām al-Ṭāʾī remains as enigmatic as a historical figure as he is influential as a poet. It is our hope that this study will convince readers of how much more study and how much more reading between the lines remains to be done to increase our understanding of the fascinating history of Arabic literature.

Appendix: the Name Ḥabīb in the First Three Islamic Centuries

Sources consulted:

TMD *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq* by Ibn al-ʿAsākir
WA *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān wa-Anbāʾ Abnāʾ al-Zamān* by Ibn Khallikān
KWW *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt* by al-Ṣafadī
MTD *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq* by Ibn Manẓūr
SNBI *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām* by Louis Cheikho

112 Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas*, 4.
113 Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas*, 11.
114 Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 257, lines 17–18.

#	Name	Dates (AH/CE)	Religion	Sources	Notes
1	Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ḥabīb ibn Maslama ibn Mālik ibn Wahb ibn Thaʿlaba al-Qurashī al-Fihrī	d. 42/663	Muslim	KWW, MTD, TMD	Companion of Prophet Muḥammad Served as governor of Upper Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan under ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb
2	Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit Qays ibn Dīnār	d. 119/736	Muslim	KWW	*ḥadīth* transmitter
3	Ḥabīb ibn al-Zubayr al-Iṣbahānī	Not specified	Muslim	KWW	*ḥadīth* transmitter
4	Abū Marzūq Ḥabīb ibn al-Shahīd al-Baṣrī	d. 145/763	Muslim	KWW, MTD, TMD	*ḥadīth* transmitter
5	Ḥabīb ibn Abī Faḍāla al-Mālikī	Not specified	Muslim	KWW	*ḥadīth* transmitter
6	Abū Muḥammad Ḥabīb ibn Abī Ḥabīb Marzūq al-Madanī	d. 218/834	Muslim	KWW	scribe (*kātib*) of Mālik (a well-known *ḥadīth* scholar)
7	Abū Tammām Ḥabīb ibn Aws ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Qays ibn al-Ashajj ibn Yaḥyā ibn Mardān al-Ṭāʾī	Various dates given (see article) d. approx. 845AD	See article	KWW, MTD, WA, TMD	Poet whose Christian origins and conversion to Islam are a matter of controversy
8	Ḥabīb ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Ṭāʾī al-Ḥimṣī	d. 247/863	Muslim	KWW	*ḥadīth* transmitter, belonged to the Ṭāʾī tribe like Abū Tammām
9	Abū Muḥammad Ḥabīb al-ʿAjamī al-Baṣrī	d. 140/758	Muslim	KWW, MTD, TMD	*ḥadīth* transmitter
10	Ḥabīb ibn Abī Ḥabīb of Damascus	Not specified	Muslim	MTD, TMD	*ḥadīth* transmitter
11	Ḥabīb ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Salmān ibn Abī al-Aʿyas al-Khawlānī	Not specified	Muslim	MTD, TMD	*ḥadīth* transmitter

(*cont.*)

#	Name	Dates (AH/CE)	Religion	Sources	Notes
12	Ḥabīb ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb, father of al-Ḥabīb	Not specified	Muslim	MTD, TMD	He was party to a conversation about Islamic practice which took place during a trip to Makkah He made Islamic *duʿā'*
13	Ḥabīb ibn Qulayʿ al-Madanī	Not specified	Unknown	MTD, TMD	The only anecdote about Ibn Qulayʿ has him as an observer to a report about a dream in which Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik is slain
14	Ḥabīb al-Aʿwar	Not specified	Muslim	MTD, TMD	*ḥadīth* transmitter
15	Ḥabīb al-Muʾadhdhin	Not specified	Muslim	MTD, TMD	Recited the call to prayer at a mosque
16	Ḥabīb ibn Qays ibn ʿAmr ibn Ḥāritha ibn Abī Rabīʿa ibn Dhahl ibn Shaybān	Not specified	Unknown	SNBI	Grandfather of al-Aʿshā, a Christian poet who lived during the Umayyad period
17	Ḥabīb ibn ʿAmr ibn Ghanm ibn Taghlib ibn Wāʾil	Not specified	Unknown	SNBI	Ancestor of several Christian poets of the Umayyad period
18	Ḥabīb ibn Abī ʿUbayda Murra ibn ʿUqba ibn Nāfiʿ al-Fihrī al-Qurashī	d. 124/741	Muslim	TMD	Waged war against *khawārij* in North Africa
19	Ḥabīb ibn ʿUmar al-Anṣārī of Damascus or Medina	Not specified	Muslim	TMD	*ḥadīth* transmitter
20	Ḥabīb ibn Kurra	Not specified	Muslim	TMD	Carried Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik's flag at the battle of Marj
21	Ḥabīb ibn Murra al-Murrī	Not specified	Unknown	TMD	Virtually nothing is known about him
22	Ḥabīb ibn ʿUbayd	Not specified	Muslim	TMD	Fought in the army of the Muslims at the time of Abū Bakr

(*cont.*)

#	Name	Dates (AH/CE)	Religion	Sources	Notes
23	Ḥabīb ibn Maslama ibn Ḥabīb ibn Ḥabīb ibn Maslama al-Fihrī	Not specified	Muslim	TMD	*ḥadīth* transmitter, great-grandson of another similarly named *ḥadīth* transmitter on this list
24	Ḥabīb ibn Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Muʿshar al-Ṭabarī	Not specified	Muslim	TMD	Muslim judge (*qāḍī*)
25	Ḥabīb ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥakam ibn Abī al-ʿĀṣ ibn Umayya al-Umawī	Not specified	Unknown	TMD	Virtually nothing is known about him

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CHAPTER 15

Paul of Antioch's *Responses to a Muslim Sheikh*

Alexander Treiger

To Fr. Sidney Griffith in gratitude for inspirational research and generous help throughout the years

The Arab Christian theologian Paul of Antioch (ca. 1200), Melkite bishop of Sidon, is best known for his polemical treatise *A Letter to a Muslim Friend* [*LMF*].[1] In this treatise, he attempts to prove that the Qur'ānic message was intended only for Pagan Arabs and did not apply to Christians and that, moreover, the Qur'ān urged Christians to remain loyal to their faith and resist conversion to Islam. The Egyptian Muslim jurist Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 1285) wrote a refutation of it (though he refrains from referring to Paul by name).[2] *LMF* was later re-written by an unknown fourteenth-century Nestorian author in Cyprus.[3] This adaptation, called the *Letter from Cyprus*, became one of the most celebrated documents of medieval Christian-Muslim polemic. Two Damascene Muslim theologians, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī, responded to it with lengthy refutations.[4]

1 Edition and French trans.: Paul Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche: Traités théologiques* (Würzburg: Echter, 1994), 240–289; English trans.: Sidney H. Griffith, "Paul of Antioch," in *The Orthodox Church in the Arab World (700–1700): An Anthology of Sources*, ed. Samuel Noble and Alexander Treiger (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014), 216–235; cf. David Thomas, "Paul of Antioch," in *CMR*, 4:78–82.

2 Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella, *Muslim-Christian Polemics across the Mediterranean: The* Splendid Replies *of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī (d. 684/1285)* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); cf. Maha El Kaisy-Friemuth, "Al-Qarāfī," in *CMR*, 4:582–587, here 585–587.

3 Alexander Treiger, "The Christology of the *Letter from the People of Cyprus*," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 65.1–2 (2013): 21–48.

4 Rifaat Ebied and David Thomas, *Muslim-Christian Polemic during the Crusades: The* Letter from the People of Cyprus *and Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī's Response* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); David Thomas, "*The Letter from Cyprus*," in *CMR*, 4:769–772; David Thomas, "Ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Dimashqī," in *CMR*, 4:798–801; Jon Hoover, "Ibn Taymiyya," in *CMR*, 4:824–878, here 834–844.

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On the other hand, Paul's other treatises, though edited and translated into French, German, and Russian, have received scant analytical attention.[5] This is the case with the *Concise Intellectual Treatise* [*CIT*]; the *Treatise to the Gentiles and the Jews* [*TGJ*];[6] the *Treatise on the Christian Sects* [*TCS*]; the *Treatise on the Oneness* [*of God*] *and the* [*Hypostatic*] *Union* [*TOU*]; and *Responses to a Muslim Sheikh* [*RMS*]. In several of these works Paul of Antioch responds to Islamic theological and philosophical claims.[7] The present contribution has the modest aim of drawing scholarly attention to Paul's *Responses to a Muslim Sheikh*—an intriguing treatise in three parts that deals with the nature of evil, the miracles of Christ, and predestination.[8]

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5 Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*; Georg Graf, "Philosophisch-theologische Schriften des Paulus al-Râhib, Bischofs von Sidon," *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und speculative Theologie* 20 (1906): 55–80, 160–179; Max Horten, "Paulus, Bischof von Sidon (XIII. Jahrh.): Einige seiner philosophischen Abhandlungen," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 19 (1906): 144–166; Oleg Davydenkov, "Bulus ar-Rahib i ego tvorenija" [Būlus al-Rāhib and His Works], in *Araby-Khristiane v istorii i literature Blizhnego Vostoka* [Arab Christians in the History and Literature of the Near East], ed. Natalia G. Golovnina (Moscow: PSTGU, 2013), 62–149.

6 Herman Teule, "Paul of Antioch's Attitude toward the Jews and the Muslims: His *Letter to the Nations and the Jews*," in *The Three Rings: Textual Studies in the Historical Trialogue of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. Barbara Roggema, Marcel Poorthuis, and Pim Valkenberg (Louvain: Peeters, 2005), 91–110.

7 Despite this, they are not covered by the entry on Paul of Antioch in *CMR* 4. Some Islamic *theological* claims refuted by Paul will be discussed below. The principal Islamic *philosophical* claims are the following: (1) God and the world exist inseparably together (*maʿan*), as the act of knocking and the accompanying sound (*ka-l-naqra wa-l-ṭanīn*); God precedes the world "in rank" (*bi-l-rutba*), not in time, and hence the world is eternal (*CIT*, ch. 8); (2) The world could not have come into existence, because this would entail change in God from being a non-agent to being an agent (*CIT*, chs. 9–10); (3) God cannot have attributes (*ṣifāt*), because if He did, the category of quality would be applicable to Him (*CIT*, ch. 12); and (4) God is the cause of causes (*ʿillat al-ʿilal*) (*CIT*, ch. 21; cf. *TGJ*, §§ 24–25).

8 Arabic text: Louis Cheikho, "Thalāth maqālāt falsafiyya li-Būlus al-rāhib usquf Ṣaydāʾ," *al-Mashriq* 7 (1904): 373–379; reprints: Louis Cheikho, *Seize traités théologiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens (IXe–XIIIe siècle)* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1906), 28–34; Louis Cheikho, *Vingt traités théologiques d'auteurs arabes chrétiens (IXe–XIIIe siècles)* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1920), 40–46 (all references in this study are to this last reprint); German trans.: Graf, "Philosophisch-theologische Schriften," 162–172; Horten, "Paulus, Bischof von Sidon," 158–166; Russian trans.: Davydenkov, "Bulus ar-Rahib," 134–141. Contrary to Paul Khoury's view (Khoury, *Paul d'Antioche*, 42), *RMS* is authentic, as proven by numerous parallels to Paul of Antioch's other works. Compare, for instance, *fa-li-Llāh al-ḥamd al-muʾtī min al-ṣakhr māʾan wa-min al-ʿūd al-yābis thamaran* (*RMS* 1, ed. Cheikho, 42, line 2) with *bi-taʾyīdi Llāh wa-ʿawnihi al-muʾtī min al-ʿūd al-yābis thamaran wa-min al-ṣakhra al-ṣammāʾ māʾan* (*TCS*, § 40, ed. Khoury, 317, lines 6–7); *ʿalā ikhtilāf alsinatihim wa-tashāsuʿ buldānihim* (*RMS* 2, ed. Cheikho, 42, line 11) with *ʿalā ikhtilāf alsinatihā wa-tashāsuʿ buldānihā* (*TGJ*, § 1, ed. Khoury, 191, line 3) and *bi-khtilāf alsinatihim ʿalā tashāsuʿ buldānihim* (*LMF*, § 15, ed. Khoury, 251, lines 9–10).

1 The Title and the Addressee of the *Responses to a Muslim Sheikh*

RMS is addressed to an unnamed Muslim opponent, referred to throughout as "the sheikh." However, under pressure from Ottoman censorship, the editor of the *editio princeps* (1904) Louis Cheikho was forced to replace the word "sheikh" with the terms "philosopher" and "Ṣābian [i.e., Pagan] philosopher," to avoid the implication that it was a *Muslim* theologian who was refuted by Paul of Antioch. In the same vein, Cheikho gave *RMS* the misleading title *Philosophical Opuscula* (*maqālāt falsafiyya*). The circumstances are explained in a private letter that Cheikho sent to the German Orientalist Max Horten:

> What I have printed … is a concession to Turkish censorship, which foolishly wanted to suppress this article. One was obliged to remove the word "sheikh" that appears in the text. The text in fact speaks of a Muslim sheikh to whom the treatise is addressed. With this, everything is explained. Please repeat again and again in Europe that censorship here is acting absurdly in that it forces me to raise my hand against the texts. There is, similarly, no mention of a Ṣābian philosopher; rather, it is the same Muslim sheikh, whose name is unmentioned.[9]

While Cheikho restored the word "sheikh" in subsequent reprints (1906 and 1920), he kept the title *Philosophical Opuscula*; it is thus under this title that the treatise became known in subsequent scholarship. Since, however, Cheikho's title has no basis in the manuscripts and is a result of a deliberate tampering with the text, it is advisable to call the treatise what it actually is: *Responses to a Muslim Sheikh*. I shall follow this practice below.

The "Muslim sheikh," addressed by *RMS*, must have been a Sunnī (for he relies on Sunnī predestinarian ḥadīth) and an Arab and must have lived in Sidon. He was not, however, originally from Sidon, for Paul refers to the sheikh and himself collectively as "two foreigners … gathered in the same town" (*gharībāni … wa-qad jamaʿatnā balda wāḥida*)—Paul being a native of Antioch.[10] The first part of *RMS* indicates that Paul is responding to a written treatise

9 Horten, "Paulus, Bischof von Sidon," 158, n. 2. For a similar case of censorship see Noble and Treiger, *The Orthodox Church*, 334, n. 50.

10 Ed. Cheikho, 44, lines 9–11. Paul even cites a line of poetry ascribed to Imruʾ al-Qays: "O our neighbor, we are both strangers here, and every stranger is a relative to another"; cf. Imruʾ al-Qays, *Dīwān Imriʾ al-Qays*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Shāfī (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2004), 49.

(or letter, *risāla*) by this Muslim opponent; this seems to be the case with the other two parts of *RMS* as well.[11]

This unnamed Muslim sheikh is most likely identical with a certain "sheikh Abū l-Surūr al-Tinnīsī, the embroiderer"[12]—the addressee of Paul's *TOU*.[13] (Significantly, in most manuscripts *RMS* follows immediately after *TOU*.) This Abū l-Surūr, unattested in any other source, had asked Paul to clarify the Christian views on the Trinity and the Incarnation; in *TOU*, Paul offers his response.

Abū l-Surūr must have been a native of the port city of Tinnīs in the Nile Delta (close to the present-day Port Said). Tinnīs was famous for its textile industry, and it was there that the embroidered cover (*kiswa*) of the Kaʿba was produced.[14] Thus, Abū l-Surūr's *laqab*, the embroiderer (*al-raqqām*), fits well with his Tinnīsian origin. It is also significant that in 1192, fearing an attack by the Crusaders, the Ayyūbid sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin) ordered the evacuation of the entire civilian population of Tinnīs. It is probably at this time that Abū l-Surūr relocated to Sidon, a coastal city with which Tinnīs had always had strong commercial ties. There, he could have come in contact with the Melkite bishop of the city, Paul of Antioch; the two could have developed a sort of intellectual friendship despite theological disagreements.

Clearly, Abū l-Surūr's profile matches that of the addressee of *RMS*. Just like the latter, Abū l-Surūr is called "sheikh" and would have been a foreigner in Sidon. Moreover, Abū l-Surūr's being a non-professional theologian (for he was a craftsman: an embroiderer) fits well with the kind of Muslim views on the nature of evil, the miracles of Christ, and predestination that are refuted in Paul of Antioch's *RMS*—views that sound more like private *theologoumena* than a professional scholar's well thought-out positions.

It is tempting to suggest that the same Abū l-Surūr al-Tinnīsī could have also been the prototype for the "Muslim friend in Sidon," to which Paul of Antioch's celebrated *LMF* is addressed.[15] Just like the "Muslim friend," who inquired of

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11 Ed. Cheikho, 40, line 24: *innī naẓartu fīmā qālahu l-shaykh … fī l-risāla allatī naẓẓamahā*; cf. 42, line 4: *lammā balaghanī mā ḥakāhu l-shaykh ʿan al-Sayyid al-Masīḥ*; 43, line 12: *lammā taʾammaltu mā yarāhu l-shaykh*.

12 For the term *raqqām*, see R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1881), 1:549b. Khoury (*Paul d'Antioche*, 311) mistakenly translates "le Calligraphe" and fails to recognize the *nisba* al-Tinnīsī, suggesting al-Tanasī and al-Tibnīnī instead. On one occasion in *RMS* (ed. Cheikho, 45, line 1), Paul calls his opponent *ḥakīm* (i.e., philosopher or physician, but perhaps simply "wise man," used as an honorific title, similarly to "sheikh").

13 Joseph Nasrallah (*HMLÉM*, III.1:267) has tentatively raised the possibility of identifying the two "sheikhs": "Trois petits traités [= *RMS*] sont adressés à un *šeiḫ* musulman … Est-ce at-Tanīsī [*sic*], le destinaire du traité b [= *TOU*]? Nous ne pouvons le dire."

14 J.-M. Mouton, "Tinnīs," in *EI2*, 10:531–532, here 532a.

15 Based on one of the manuscripts of *LMF* (Oxford, Bodleian, Hunt. 240, copied in Egypt

Paul why the Christians of Byzantium (and the local Arabic Christian community in Sidon) refused to embrace Islam, Abū l-Surūr was evidently curious to know why Christians believed what they did—hence Paul's précis of Christian beliefs in *TOU*. In fact, *LMF* seems to be a literary elaboration of *TOU*, in which a (possibly fictitious) dialogical framework involving the "learned Byzantines" has been added, arguments have been expanded, and the Muslim opponent has been anonymized. If this is the case, it is ultimately the encounter with the same Abū l-Surūr al-Tinnīsī that provided the impetus for the composition of *LMF*. Though there is no way of knowing whether the addressee of *RMS* and *TOU* and the prototype for the "Muslim friend" in *LMF* was actually one and the same person, this certainly appears plausible, given that the assumption that he was the same produces a coherent combined image.

2 Christian-Muslim Polemic in the *Responses to a Muslim Sheikh*

In *RMS*, Paul of Antioch responds to three theological claims:

1. Good and evil are inseparable, because they are always relative (i.e., what is good for some is evil for others, and vice versa) (*RMS* 1);
2. Christ's miracles must be interpreted figuratively: in the sense that Christ restored sight to those "blind in their hearts," resurrected those "dead in their souls," etc. (*RMS* 2);
3. Since man is completely subjugated to God, he has no capacity to act autonomously, and hence God has pre-determined all human actions and final destiny in paradise or hellfire (*RMS* 3).

I shall now examine these three claims in order.

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on "Thursday, the feast of St. John the prophet, 1266 AMart" [= 30 August 1549, in reality a Friday]; not taken into account in Khoury's edition), Joseph Nasrallah indicates that *LMF* is addressed to a certain Abū l-Qāsim (*HMLÉM*, III.1:260, n. 116; cf. Alfred F.L. Beeston, "An Important Christian Arabic Manuscript in Oxford," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 19 (1953): 197–205, here 199). This, however, is unlikely. The Oxford manuscript (the only one to mention Abū l-Qāsim) seems to have confused the addressee of *LMF* with the vizier Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Maghribī, Elias of Nisibis' interlocutor in his *Kitāb al-Majālis* (a work copied later in the same manuscript and, incidentally, one of the sources of Paul of Antioch's *LMF*).

3 "Slaughter is Bad for the Sheep, but Good for the Person who Eats It" (*RMS* 1)

Paul of Antioch presents his opponent's argument as follows:

> I have examined the sheikh's view, may God prolong his life, put forward in the treatise [or: letter] that he composed to the effect that there never exists good without evil or evil without good, for whatever is good for some is evil for others, and whatever is evil for some is good for others. He used the analogy of a slaughtered sheep: slaughter is bad for the sheep, but good for the person who eats it. Similarly, in the case of a man robbed of his money robbery is good for the robber, but bad for the robbed.[16]

The claim that good and evil are relative and complementary is unusual for Islamic theology. Since we do not have the sheikh's original treatise or letter, we can only speculate what role this claim played in his overall argument against Christianity. Perhaps he wanted to make the point that because good and evil were two sides of the same coin, God was the creator of both. The idea that God is the creator of all human actions, both good and evil, is characteristic of traditionalist Sunnī Muslim theology, both Ḥanbalism[17] and Ashʿarism[18] (in contrast to the Muʿtazila, who believed that humans were the agents of their own actions). Traditionalist Muslim theology (again in contrast to the Muʿtazila) also insisted that God was not exclusively benevolent (willing good alone), but was both benevolent and malevolent (willing both good and evil); God was, for example, deceiving and leading certain humans astray (*iḍlāl*).[19]

16 Ed. Cheikho, 40:24–41:4. All the translations used in this study are my own (unless indicated otherwise).

17 Imām al-Bukhārī, the author of the famous *Ṣaḥīḥ*, put together a special ḥadīth collection on the createdness of human actions: *Khalq afʿāl al-ʿibād wa-l-radd ʿalā l-jahmiyya wa-aṣḥāb al-taʿṭīl*, 2 vols. (Riyadh: Dār Aṭlas al-khaḍrāʾ li-l-nashr wa-l-tawzīʿ, 2005).

18 The Ashʿarite doctrine of *kasb* means that humans "take ownership" over good or evil actions created for them by God. See Richard M. Frank, "The Structure of Created Causality according to al-Aš'arî," *Studia Islamica* 25 (1966): 13–75.

19 The caliph ʿUmar, while preaching in al-Jābiya (the former Ghassānid residence in the Golan Heights), reportedly called a Christian catholicos "an enemy of God" and threatened him with execution for denying that God could lead astray. See al-Firyābī, *Kitāb al-Qadar*, ed. ʿAbdallāh ibn Ḥamad al-Manṣūr (Riyadh: Aḍwāʾ al-salaf, 1997), 64–66 (Nos. 54–55); cf. Josef van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie: Studien zum Entstehen prädestinatianischer Überlieferung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 36 and 118.

Clearly, this conception of God is foreign to traditional Christianity, which sees God as exclusively benevolent and wishing all humanity to be saved.[20]

In response Paul argues, first, that virtues (chastity, mercy, forgiveness, etc.) and virtuous religious practices (e.g., prayer and devotion) are *purely good* both for those who practice them and for others, whereas these virtues' opposites are *purely evil* both for those who practice them and for others. He argues further—in line with both Platonic and Patristic theology—that evil has no actual existence, but is merely a privation (*ʿadam*) of the good; consequently (though Paul does not spell this out), evil could not have been created by God.

4 "Christ Healed the Blind in Heart" (*RMS* 2)

Paul of Antioch recounts his opponent's argument as follows:

> It came to my attention that the sheikh said about the Lord Christ that what is reported about Him—His resurrecting the dead, opening the eyes of the blind, and cleansing the lepers—has no [literal] actuality but is to be understood in the [metaphorical] sense (*laysa lahu ḥaqīqa bal lahu maʿānin*). [In the sheikh's view], Christ opened the eyes of those blind *in their heart* and resurrected those dead *in their souls* (for it is sometimes said: "So-and-so is blind in his heart" or "So-and-so is dead in his soul"); as regards Christ's *actually* resurrecting a dead man, opening a blind person's eyes, or cleansing a leper, this never happened.[21]

Again we are faced with an unusual claim for a Muslim. Christ's miracles—including healing the blind, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead—are reported not only in the Gospel narratives, but also in the Qur'ān (Q 3:49 and 5:110). To deny that Christ's miracles took place, Paul of Antioch's opponent would have had both to assign these Qur'ānic verses an allegorical meaning (*bāṭin*) and to reject the validity of their literal meaning (*ẓāhir*).

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20 Thus, for example, the ninth-century Byzantine "Ritual of Abjuration" anathematizes "the blasphemy of Muḥammad, claiming that God leads astray whomever He wishes and guides whomever He wishes, and that if God so willed, men would not wage war against one another, but God does whatever He wishes and is Himself the cause of all good and evil"—see Édouard Montet, "Un rituel d'abjuration des musulmans dans l'Église grecque," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 53 (1906): 145–163, here 151–152; cf. Antonio Rigo, "Ritual of Abjuration," in *CMR*, 1:821–824.

21 Ed. Cheikho, 42, lines 5–8.

Allegorization of Christ's miracles is found in the *Epistles* of the Ikhwān al-ṣafā' (given some textual similarities, perhaps the likeliest source for Paul of Antioch's opponent)[22] and in some Ṣūfī Qur'ān commentaries.[23] None of these sources, however, rejects *the validity of the literal meaning of these verses* (*ẓāhir*), i.e., denies that Christ's miracles actually took place. While the philosophers—particularly Avicenna—declared resurrection of the body to be impossible (and hence were forced to allegorize those Qur'ānic passages that referred to it), they focused not on Christ's miracle of raising the dead, but on the future universal resurrection in the eschaton.[24] Generally speaking, the standard line of argument of Muslim polemicists against Christianity on the subject of Christ's miracles was not to deny them, but to claim that they were performed "with God's permission" and thus in no way bore witness to Christ's divine status.[25]

In response, Paul argues that Christianity spread among all the nations[26] despite the fact that "Christ was, in external appearance, a weak man with no armies, soldiers, money, or slaves," that the apostles were few in number, meek in appearance, and wielding no political power, and that Christian preaching "involved neither enticement (*raghba*) nor threat (*rahba*) and did not appeal to tribal solidarity (*ʿaṣabiyya*), authorize [licentious behavior] (*rukhṣa*), or sugar-coat [its teachings] (*taḥsīn qawl*)."[27] According to Paul, had Christ's miracles not been real, the Christian message could not have gained such widespread acceptance.

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22 Epistle 42 / IV.1—see *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-ṣafā' wa-khullān al-wafā'*, 4 vols. (Beirūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1957), 3:485–486.

23 For example, in the so-called *Tafsīr Ibn ʿArabī* (in reality by ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī) on Q 3:49—see *Tafsīr al-Shaykh al-Akbar ... Muḥyī l-Dīn ibn ʿArabī*, 2 vols. (Būlāq: Dār al-ṭibāʿa, 1867), 1:113, lines 17–21 (available on http://altafsir.com). This particular text, however, is chronologically later than Paul of Antioch.

24 Tariq Jaffer, "Bodies, Souls and Resurrection in Avicenna's *ar-Risāla al-Aḍḥawīya fī amr al-maʿād*," in *Before and After Avicenna*, ed. David C. Reisman and Ahmed H. al-Rahim (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 163–174.

25 David Thomas, "The Miracles of Jesus in Early Islamic Polemic," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 39.2 (1994): 221–243.

26 He mentions the Nubians, Ethiopians, Franks, Byzantines, Abkhaz, Armenians, Syrians, and Russians. Cheikho mis-vocalizes *al-Abkhāz* and in a footnote (42, n. 1) suggests that this could be a corruption of *al-Injliz*, i.e., "the English" (this impossible reading is, unfortunately, followed by Horten and Davydenkov). Graf, "Philosophisch-theologische Schriften," 165 suggests an equally improbable "Hungarians." For a somewhat similar list of nations (including the Abkhaz) that have embraced Christianity see the *Dīwān* of the Melkite poet Sulaymān al-Ghazzī (eleventh century)—Noble and Treiger, *The Orthodox Church*, 164.

27 This is a stock argument in Christian Arabic theology. See Mark N. Swanson, "Apology or its Evasion? Some Ninth-Century Arabic Christian Texts on Discerning the True Religion,"

5 "God Created Some for Paradise, Others for Hellfire" (*RMS* 3)

Paul of Antioch presents his opponent's argument as follows:

> I have examined the sheikh's view, may God prolong his life, that God, may He be exalted, created some particular people (*aqwāman bi-aʿyānihim*) for paradise and other particular people for hellfire. He argues that whoever is created for hellfire, even if he should do good deeds his entire life, God will cause (*sabbaba*) him, be it even for a moment before his death, to commit an evil deed which will deliver him to hellfire; likewise, whoever is created for paradise, even if he should commit evil deeds his entire life, God will help him along (*yassara*), be it even for a fraction of an hour, to do a good deed which will allow him entrance to paradise. [The sheikh's] reasoning is that man is subjugated (*marbūb*) [to God], and whoever is subjugated has no capacity to act autonomously (*lā ḥukma lahu fī dhātihi*). I find this to be a repugnant view which will bring whoever holds it most surely to perdition.[28]

It is obvious that Paul's opponent relies on Sunnī predestinarian ḥadīths. According to one such ḥadīth, God took two handfuls of clay (or in another recension: Adam's descendants in the form of little particles from Adam's back; cf. Q 7:172) and said "These are for paradise, and I do not care, and these are for hellfire, and I do not care."[29] Another variant, perhaps closer to what Paul's opponent had in mind, reads: "I *created* these for paradise, and they shall do the works of the inhabitants of paradise; I *created* these for hellfire, and they shall do the works of the inhabitants of hellfire."[30] According to another ḥadīth, an angel is commanded to write on each foetus' heart four things: one's means of livelihood, one's life span, one's actions, and whether one will be miserable or happy (*shaqī aw saʿīd*) in the afterlife. One may live one's entire life as one of the people of hellfire (or paradise) till there remains "an arm's length" (*dhirāʿ*) between him and hellfire (or paradise), but then "the writing [on his

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Currents in Theology and Mission 37.5 (2010): 389–399; reprint in *Christian Theology and Islam*, ed. Michael Root and James J. Buckley (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014): 45–63.

28 Ed. Cheikho, 43, lines 12–17.

29 E.g., Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, Musnad Muʿāẓ ibn Jabal, No. 21976 (Būlāq edition, 6 vols. (Cairo, 1895), 5:239; ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir and Ḥamza Aḥmad al-Zayn, 19 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1995), 16:189).

30 E.g., Mālik, *Muwaṭṭaʾ*, Kitāb al-Qadar (46), No. 3337 (ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Aʿẓamī, 8 vols. (Abu Dhabi: Muʾassasat Zāyid ibn Sulṭān, 2004), 5:1322–1323); van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie*, 32–39.

heart] takes precedence over him" (*yasbiqu ʿalayhi l-kitāb*), he commits a deed of the opposite kind, and enters paradise (or hellfire) instead.[31] Another relevant ḥadīth is: "Everyone is helped along (*muyassar*) [by God] towards that [destiny in the afterlife] for which one was created."[32]

The provenance of Paul's opponent's argument that man is subjugated (*marbūb*) to God and hence has no capacity to act autonomously (*lā ḥukma lahu fī dhātihi*) is more obscure. The closest parallel appears to be al-Ghazālī's *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*). In Book 35 of the *Iḥyāʾ*, al-Ghazālī argues that God is the only agent [in the universe] to the exclusion of everything else (*al-fāʿil ʿalā l-infirād dūna ghayrihi*), while all the others are subservient (*musakhkharūn*) [to Him] and have no independent [agency] to move a speck of dust in the kingdom of the heavens and the earth [i.e., in the entire universe].[33]

Al-Ghazālī argues that this "subservience" (*taskhīr*) includes both inanimate objects (*jamādāt*) and living beings (*ḥayawānāt*).[34] Inanimate objects have no agency because they are links in a deterministic causal chain that goes back to the Unmoved Prime Mover, i.e., God Himself (*al-muḥarrik al-awwal alladhī lā muḥarrika lahu wa-lā huwa mutaḥarrik fī nafsihi ʿazza wa-jalla*). Like the pen in the writer's hand, they have no capacity to act autonomously (*lā ḥukma lahu fī nafsihi*).[35]

According to al-Ghazālī, living beings, too, including humans, are links in a deterministic causal chain.[36] Though they have "will" (*irāda*), their will is not autonomous, but completely dependent on their "knowledge" (*ʿilm*), which, in turn, is completely dependent on higher causes, ultimately going back to God's Will and Knowledge, as executed by God's Power. Thus, though ostensi-

31 E.g., al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Kitāb al-Qadar (82), ch. 1, No. 6594 (ed. and trans. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān, 9 vols. (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), 8:316); van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie*, 1–32; Michael A. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-Critical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 111–115 and 148.

32 E.g., al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Kitāb al-Tawḥīd (97), ch. 54, No. 7551 (ed. Khān, 9:393); cf. Kitāb al-Qadar (82), ch. 2, No. 6596 (ed. Khān, 9:317); van Ess, *Zwischen Ḥadīṯ und Theologie*, 39–47; Cook, *Early Muslim Doctrine*, 115.

33 Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, Book 35, *shaṭr* 1, *bayān* 2 (al-Tawfīqiyya edition, 5 vols. (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-tawfiqiyya, n.d.), 4:344, lines 18–19).

34 On *taskhīr* see Sarra Tlili, *Animals in the Qur'ān* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 92–115.

35 Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, Book 35, *shaṭr* 1, *bayān* 2, 4:345, lines 1–5.

36 Al-Ghazālī adopted Avicenna's views on causality—see Richard M. Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System: al-Ghazâlî & Avicenna* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1992); on Avicenna cf. Catarina Belo, *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), here 113–119.

bly having "choice" (*ikhtiyār*), human beings are always *compelled* to make the "choices" they make (*majbūr ʿalā l-ikhtiyār*).[37] This deterministic view became standard in post-Ghazālian Ashʿarism; thus, for example, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī claimed that "man is compelled, though having the appearance of a choosing agent" (*al-insān muḍṭarr fī ṣūrat al-mukhtār*).[38]

It is obvious that Paul's opponent's view is quite similar to al-Ghazalī's. Both see human beings as so completely subservient to God that they have no agency. Furthermore, they both agree that human beings' final destiny in hellfire or paradise is thoroughly deterministic. There is similarity also on the terminological level. Though Paul's opponent uses the term *marbūb* rather than *musakhkhar*, the two terms are synonymous (and in fact al-Ghazālī uses them synonymously elsewhere).[39] Moreover, both Paul's opponent and al-Ghazālī use the rare expression *lā ḥukma lahu fī dhātihi* (or *fī nafsihi*) to describe something (or someone) with no autonomous agency.[40]

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37 Elsewhere al-Ghazālī explains how human beings are driven to their final destinies in hellfire or paradise in a thoroughly deterministic manner: they are "dragged there in chains of causality"; he also refers to one of the ḥadīths mentioned above: "Everyone is helped along towards that [destiny] for which one was created"—see al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, Book 32, *shaṭr* 2, *rukn* 1, *bayān* 3, 4:125, lines 7–13; cf. al-Ghazālī, *al-Maqṣad al-asnā fī sharḥ maʿānī asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā*, ed. Fadlou A. Shehadi (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1971), 98–105 (discussion of the divine name al-Ḥakam); Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 219–220 and 344–345, note 26.

38 Wilferd Madelung, "The Late Muʿtazila and Determinism: The Philosophers' Trap," in *Yād-nāma in memoria di Alessandro Bausani*, 2 vols., ed. Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti and Lucia Rostagno (Rome: Bardi Editore, 1991), 1:245–257, here 245. Paradoxically, with Ibn Taymiyya Ḥanbalism moves in the direction of free will (while maintaining divine *qadar*)—see Livnat Holtzman, "Human Choice, Divine Guidance and the *Fiṭra* Tradition: The Use of Ḥadīth in Theological Treatises by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 163–188.

39 *Maʿrifat ḥaqārat al-nafs wa-khissatihā wa-kawnihā ʿabdan musakhkharan marbūban*—*Iḥyā*, Book 4, *bāb* 3, 1:248, line 19.

40 This expression seems related to the Greek term for free will, *to autexousion*, literally "sovereignty / authority over oneself," i.e., the power to determine one's own actions. In Syriac, this term is sometimes rendered as *mshallṭūṭ* (or *shallīṭūṭ*) *b-yāṭā* (thus in Jacob of Edessa—see Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 149 and 217, note 49). Christian Arabic translations of Patristic literature typically give some variation of *sulṭa ʿalā l-dhāt* or (more rarely) *istīlāʾ ʿalā l-dhāt*: e.g., *al-sulṭa al-dhātiyya* in the anonymous translation of Pseudo-Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy*, IX.3 (Sinai ar. 85, fol. 117r, line 8); *sulṭān dhātihā* in Ibn Saḥqūn's translation of the same (Sinai ar. 268, fol. 44r, line 7); *musallaṭ ʿalā nafsihi* in the "old" translation of John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, ch. 86 / IV.13 (Sinai ar. 549, fol. 85r, line 8); *tasalluṭihā ʿalā dhātihā* in the translation of Gregory of Nyssa, *De opificio hominis*, ch. 4 (Sinai ar. 270, fol. 149v, line 11; cf. fol. 187v,

Paul of Antioch's response can be summarized as follows:

1. First, if certain humans are created "for" hellfire, hellfire is effectively their natural habitat (just as water is the natural habitat of animals created "for" water); consequently, they cannot be punished there; thus, Paul's opponent's view invalidates punishment in the afterlife;
2. Second, the opponent presents God as being unjust (*ẓālim*) in creating certain human beings for hellfire, commanding them ⟨not⟩[41] to sin, and once they are unable to fulfil His command, committing them to hellfire (Paul is here deploying a classic Qadarī and Muʿtazilī argument against the predestinarians);
3. Third, the opponent's view renders fasting, prayer, worship, chastity, and good deeds useless because they cannot change a person's final destiny;
4. Finally, even if "the Lord controls [the actions of] those subservient to Him" (*al-rabb mutaḥakkim fī l-marbūb*), this control should not be taken to be absolute; if even brute beasts have things over which they exercise free will, this applies even more to humans, given that man is the most exalted of all creatures, even in comparison to the angels.

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line 7); *istīlāʾinā ʿalā dhātinā* in Antonios' translation of John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, ch. 39 / 11.25 (Sinai ar. 318, fol. 214r). Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn's translation of Nemesius' *De natura hominis* (mis-ascribed to Gregory of Nyssa) renders *to autexousion* as *al-istiṭāʿa* (e.g., throughout ch. 39 in Aleppo, Sbath 1010, fols. 173v–177v)—a term that underlies Muʿtazilī discussions of *istiṭāʿa* that must precede human action (I thank Gregor Schwarb for clarifying this point to me). Al-Ghazālī's (and Paul's opponent's) use of the root *ḥ-k-m* (rather than *s-l-ṭ* or *w-l-y*) may have something to do with the Qurʾānic proclamation that "there is no authority (*ḥukm*) except with God" (Q 6:57 and 12:40).

41 This word should be restored in the edition.

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PART 4

Manuscript Discoveries

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CHAPTER 16

Evagrius Ponticus at the Monastery of the Syrians: Newly Documented Evidence for an Arabic Reception History

Stephen J. Davis

Over the course of his long and productive career, Sidney Griffith's scholarship has focused on the intersection of the Greek-, Syriac- and Arabic-speaking worlds. His many publications have mapped the diverse pathways of reception for Christian theology and biblical interpretation across these linguistic, cultural, and ecclesiastical settings. This chapter focuses on a specific site for that intersection, the Monastery of the Syrians (Dayr al-Suryān) in Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Egypt, and on its manuscript library as an archive for assessing the transmission of Greek patristic theology (via Syriac) into Arabic. In particular, I will be surveying the Dayr al-Suryān collection as evidence for the Christian Arabic reception of Evagrius Ponticus and will raise questions about the indirect transmission of Origen's thought into that language. In the process, I will report on my discovery of two previously undocumented manuscripts at the Monastery of the Syrians containing the only complete, currently extant Arabic copies of Evagrius' *Kephalaia Gnostika*.

1 *Evagriana Arabica*: the State of the Question

Studies of Evagrius in Greek and Syriac have proliferated in the past century, with editions and translations by W. Frankenberg, Antoine Guillaumont, Gösta Vitestam, Paul Géhin, Claire Gillaumont, Michel Parmentier, Jeremy Driscoll, Robert E. Sinkewicz, Augustine Casiday, Fr. Theophanes (Constantine), David Brakke, Luke Dysinger, and Ilaria L.E. Ramelli.[1] Based on this foundational textual work, studies of Evagrius' life, thought, and theological inheritance have

1 Wilhelm Frankenberg, ed., *Evagrius Ponticus* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1912); Antoine Guillaumont, ed. and trans., *Les six centuries des "Kephalaia gnostica"* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1958); Gösta Vitestam, ed., *Seconde partie du traité, qui passe sous le nom de La grande letter d'Évagre le Pontique à Mélanie l'ancienne, d'après le manuscript du British Museum Add. 17192* (Lund: Gleerup, 1964); Paul Géhin, Antoine Guillaumont, and Claire Guillaumont, ed. and trans., *Évagre le Pontique: Traité pratique, ou Le moine*, 2 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 1971); Martin Parmentier, "Evagrius

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proliferated as well.[2] By contrast, there has been noticeably less attention given to Evagrius' legacy in Arabic. In what follows, I summarize the state of the question with respect to both bibliographical studies and editions.

1.1 *Bibliographical and Archival Studies*

Foundational bibliographical and archival studies have been produced by Georg Graf, Samir Khalil Samir, and Paul Géhin. In volume one of his magisterial *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*, published in 1944, Graf dedicates just over two pages to Evagrius' literary legacy in Arabic.[3] He documents the transmission of Evagrius' works both collectively and individually. First, Graf identifies a common corpus of Evagrian and Ps.-Evagrian works transmitted in three key Arabic manuscripts preserved in the Vatican collection, in the national library in Paris, and in the archives of Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo (which has been relocated since then to the Monastery of

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of Pontus' Letter to Melania," *Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 46 (1985): 2–38 (reprinted in *Forms of Devotion, Conversion, Worship, Spirituality, and Asceticism*, ed. E. Ferguson [New York: Garland, 1999], 272–309); Paul Géhin, ed., *Scholies aux Proverbes* (Paris: Cerf, 1987); Antoine Guillaumont and Claire Guillaumont, ed. and trans., *Évagre le Pontique: Le gnostique, ou À celui qui est devenu digne de la science* (Paris: Cerf, 1989); Paul Géhin, Antoine Guillaumont, and Claire Guillaumont, ed. and trans., *Évagre le Pontique: Sur le pensées* (Paris: Cerf, 1998); Jeremy Driscoll, trans., *Evagrius Ponticus: Ad Monachos* (New York: Newman Press, 2003); Robert E. Sinkewicz, trans., *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Augustine Casiday, *Evagrius Ponticus*, new ed. (London: Routledge, 2006); Fr. Theophanes (Constantine), trans., *The Psychological Basis of Mental Prayer in the Heart, Volume 2: The Evagrian Ascetical System* (Mount Athos: Timios Prodromos, 2006); David Brakke, trans., *Evagrius of Pontus: Talking Back* (*Antirrhetikos*)*; A Monastic Handbook for Combating Demons* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009); Luke Dysinger, trans., "Evagrius: Praktikos," http://www.ldysinger.com/Evagrius/01_Prak/00a_start.htm; Luke Dysinger, trans. "Evagrius: Gnostikos (CPG 2431) and Kephalaia Gnostika," http://www.ldysinger.com/Evagrius/02_Gno-Keph/00a_start.htm; Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, trans., *Evagrius's* Kephalaia Gnostika*: A New Translation of the Unreformed Text from the Syriac* (Atlanta: SBL, 2015); Paul Géhin, ed., *Chapitres sur la prière* (Paris: Cerf, 2017).

2 It is not feasible to provide a comprehensive bibliography here, but in addition to the scholars cited above, see also the important work of Hans Urs von Balthasar, David Bradford, David Bundy, Gabriel Bunge, Elizabeth Clark, Kevin Corrigan, Susanna Elm, Joel Kalvesmaki, Julia Konsantinovsky, Rebecca Krawiec, Michael O'Laughlin, François Refoulé, Columba Stewart, Monica Tobon, and Robin Darling Young.

3 Georg Graf, *GCAL*, 1:397–399. In compiling his entry on Evagrius, Graf cites an earlier study by Otto Zöckler (*Evagrius Pontikus: Seine Stellung in der altchristlichen Literatur- und Dogmengeschichte* [Munich: C.H. Beck, 1893], 34–48), who, in discussing Syriac and Arabic versions of Evagrius' works, devoted his attention almost exclusively to the Syriac witnesses. See also Samir Khalil Samir, "Évagre le Pontique dans la tradition arabo-copte," in *Actes du IVe congrés copte; Louvain-la-Neuve, 5–10 septembre 1988*, ed. M. Rassart-Debergh and J. Ries (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université catholique, 1992), 125–153, at 127.

Saint Menas—*Dayr Mār Mīnā*—west of Alexandria).[4] This collection consists of the following works:[5]

- Sect. 1–16: *Letter from Eulogius* (*Lūkiyūs*) *to Evagrius* and Evagrius' *Reply* (CPG 2447; Vat. ar. 93, ff. 1a–33b);[6]
- Sect. 17: *On Prayer* (CPG 2452; Vat. ar. 93, ff. 33b–48a);
- Sect. 18: *On the Eight Evil Thoughts* (*Praktikos*) (CPG 2430; Vat. ar. 93, ff. 48a–62b);
- Sect. 19–27: *Answer to the Eight Thoughts* (*Antirrhetikos*) (CPG 2434; Vat. ar. 93, ff. 62b–112b);
- Sect. 28–35: *On the Eight Spirits of Malice* (CPG 2451; Vat. ar. 93, ff. 112b–126a);
- Sect. 36: *On Various Evil Thoughts*, chapters 1–12 (CPG 2450; Vat. ar. 93, ff. 126b–134a);
- Sect. 37–39: *In Imitation of Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Proverbs* (Vat. ar. 93, ff. 134a–138b).

To this standard corpus, the Paris manuscript adds an additional section containing *An Observation on the Life of Evagrius by One of His Disciples* (Par. ar. 157, ff. 175a–178b).[7] The library collection at the Monastery of the Syrians provides further confirmation that this sequence of works became a standardized format for the manuscript transmission of Evagrius' works in Arabic.

Graf also documented the transmission of four separate, individual works in Arabic attributed to Evagrius:

1. *Kephalaia gnostika* (CPG 2432; Cairo, Coptic Museum 622, ff. 147a–177b [1739 CE]; Mingana ar. christ. 212 [only 4 leaves; ca. 1300 CE])[8]

4 Vat. ar. 93 (ff. 1r–138v, in 36 sections; 14th cent., with more recent sections); Par. ar. 157 (ff. 1r–175r, in 36 sections; post-14th cent.); and Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate, Theol. 374 (ff. 94r–253r, in 35 sections; 1764).

5 Throughout this article and in the appended catalogue, the recto and verso of folia are indicated by "a" and "b" respectively, following a common convention for working with Arabic manuscripts. For additional details related to cataloguing methodology, see the "Key" at the beginning of the Appendix.

6 Eulogius' letter is only extant in Arabic (Samir, "Évagre le Pontique," 142–143). Evagrius' reply is identifiable with his *Treatise for the Monk Eulogius* (CPG 2447).

7 Graf (*GCAL*, 2:399) also mentions a copy of Evagrius' *Life* preserved in Jerusalem (Jerus. Mark. Bishāra, No. 44).

8 The Coptic Museum copy of the *Kephalaia gnostika* is identifiable with Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate, Theol. 152, discussed by Paul Géhin, "La tradition arabe d'Évagre le Pontique," *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 3 (2006): 83–104, at 95–96. While Graf assumes that this eighteenth-century text was copied from a prototype dated to 1275, Géhin (p. 96) shows how this interpretation was based on a misreading of a colophon after the preceding work in the manuscript (a copy of John Saba's *Kephalaia gnostika*, or *Chapters of Knowledge*). Graf (*GCAL*, 1:398) also mentions a selection of aphorisms (76–100) from the second of his *Sententia* in

2. *Homilies on the Teacher and their Disciples* (Cairo, Coptic Museum 80.2 [1895/1896 CE]);[9]
3. *Catena on Genesis* (CPG 2458);[10]
4. A *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* (CPG 2461; Vat. syr. 424, f. 185a–b [Garshuni, 16th cent. CE]).

In the Acts of the Fourth International Congress of Coptic Studies (convened in Louvain in 1988 and published in 1992), Samir Khalil Samir built on Graf's foundational work by revisiting and expanding on the Arabic manuscript evidence preserved in Egypt. His purpose was "to identify an Evagrian corpus transmitted by the Copts" in Arabic, and he used Graf's earlier observations as the basis for his study.[11]

In reviewing the manuscript evidence of Egyptian provenance, Samir supplements Graf's list. Alongside the previously cited texts from the Vatican (Vat. ar. 93), the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (Par. ar. 157A), and the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo (Coptic Patriarchate, Theol. 374, which he identifies as lost and thus leaves the folia unnumbered), he also lists another manuscript from Cairo (Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate, Theol. 247, copied at the Monastery of St. Antony in 1905), as well as two from Wādī al-Naṭrūn—one from the Monastery of St. Macarius dating to the mid-twentieth century (Hom. 24, pp. 1–121; 1957), and one undated copy from the Monastery of the Syrians (Dayr al-Suryān MS 174), which he notes has contents very similar to Par. ar. 157.

Samir then proceeds to provide a fuller catalogue of individual Evagrian works and their manuscript attestations. He begins with eleven works already attested in Greek or Syriac. These include: (1) *Treatise for the Monk Eulogius* (CPG 2447); (2) *On the Vices Opposed to Virtue* (CPG 2448); (3) *On Prayer* (CPG 2452); (4) *Practical Treatise in 100 Chapters* (*Praktikos*) (CPG 2430); (5) *Antirrhetikos* (CPG 2434); (6) *On the Eight Spirits of Malice* (CPG 2451); (7) *On Various Evil Thoughts* (CPG 2450); (8) *Sentences for Monks / Sentences to a Virgin* (CPG 2435); (9) *Letter to Anatolius* (CPG 2430); (10) *Kephalaia gnostika* (CPG 2432); and (11) *Homilies on the Teachers and their Disciples* (possibly CPG 2449). Next, Samir documents nine Evagrian works not attested in Greek or

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Mingana ar. christ. 212 (four leaves; ca. 1300), and a collection of *Homilies on the Teachers and Their Disciples* (Cairo, Coptic Museum 376 (80, 2 Simaika); 1895/6) listed as #2 above.

9 Samir ("Évagre le Pontique dans la tradition arabo-copte," 141) tentatively identifies this text with CPG 2449, marking it with a question mark. Further study would be necessary to confirm this identification.

10 P. de Lagarde, *Materialien zur Kritik und Geschichte des Pentateuchs*, volume 1 (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1867), xvi.

11 Samir Khalil Samir, "Évagre le Pontique dans la tradition arabo-copte," *passim*; quote at 128 (my translation).

Syriac: (1) *Letter from Eulogius* (*Lūkiyūs*) *to Evagrius*; (2) *In Imitation of Ecclesiastes*; (3) *In Imitation of the Song of Songs*; (4) *In Imitation of Proverbs*; (5) *Letter on Patience to Evagrius, Bishop of Antioch*; (6) *In Imitation of the Life of Egyptian and Syrian Monks*; (7) *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer* (CPG 2461); (8) a fragment taken from the *Spiritual Fathers*; (9) and an anonymous *Life of Saint Evagrius*. Samir's research helpfully supplements and updates Graf's catalogue, although with attention only to Egyptian manuscript evidence.

Finally, let me turn to the more recent work of Paul Géhin, who published a pair of articles in 2005 and 2006 revisiting the question of Evagrius' reception in Arabic. The first of those two articles focuses on evidence for the *Chapters on Prayer* in Syriac and Arabic. Géhin argues that the Evagrian corpus in Arabic took shape in the ninth century, and he explores the complex relationships between Arabic copies of the *Chapters on Prayer* and their Greek and Syriac *Vorlagen*.

Examining new manuscript witnesses from the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, Géhin identifies and analyzes two different modes of translation. On the one hand, in the case of a set of three Arabic texts,[12] he identifies a "Syriacizing" (*syriacisant*) mode of translation into Arabic, one that hewed quite close to an earlier phase of Syriac translation practice that tended toward the literal. The resulting Arabic translation thus retained elements of both Greek and Syriac syntax. On the other hand, in the case of another manuscript from Sinai,[13] Géhin identifies by contrast a distinctively non-literal, paraphrastic Arabic translation that probably represented an effort to massage an earlier literalizing (and syntactically awkward) Arabic version into a more "acceptable" and "durable" form by eliminating certain Syriacisms.[14]

Géhin's second article, published in 2006, explores these translation patterns more broadly. Building on the inventories published by Graf and Samir, he carefully documents the dependence of Arabic Evagriana on earlier Greek,

12 Sinai ar. 329 (10th cent.), Sinai ar. 549 (10th cent.), and Sinai ar. 237 (13th cent.).

13 Strasbourg 4225 (dated to 901).

14 Paul Géhin, "Les versions syriaques et arabes des Chapitres sur la prière d'Évagre le Pontique: quelques données nouvelles," *Patrimoine* 9 (2005): 178–197. It should be noted here that in an article written a decade earlier (and discussed further below), the author published the Arabic version of three short Evagrian texts and made a different observation regarding translation methodology: *contra* earlier arguments for a Syriac intermediary text (see Irénée Hausherr, "Le 'De Oratione' d'Évagre le Pontique en syriaque et en arabe," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 128 [1939]: 7–71), Géhin contended that the translator in that case depended directly on the Greek: see Paul Géhin, "Evagriana d'un manuscript basilien (Vaticanus gr. 2028; olim Basilianus 67)," *Le Muséon* 109 (1996): 59–85, at 75–76.

Syriac, and Coptic versions.[15] Géhin begins by discussing "le grand corpus arabe d'Évagre" in the six manuscripts identified by Samir, noting not only the contents of the works contained therein, but also the conspicuous absence of major works such as the *Kephalaia gnostika*, *Gnostikos*, Evagrius' letters, his *Sentences to a Virgin*, the *Skemmata*, and *Foundations of the Monastic Life*. Géhin also observes that the treatise *On Prayer* is not transmitted in its entirety, while other idiosyncratic works are incorporated despite being not otherwise attested (e.g., the *Letter from Eulogius to Evagrius*) or only attested in Coptic (e.g., his *Commentary on the Lord's Prayer*).

This Arabic corpus reviewed by Géhin is (apart from a truncated Syriac version) the only testimony for the circulation of a standardized collection under Evagrius' name. Otherwise, Evagrius' works were typically transmitted under the name of Nilus of Ancyra. Accordingly, the second section of Géhin's article is a treatment of this pseudonymous corpus. This "Nilene" patrimony includes the *Chapters on Prayer* preserved in the manuscripts at Sinai and in Strasbourg discussed above (Sinai ar. 329, 549, and 237; Strasbourg 4225), the treatise *On the Eight Spirits of Malice* (documented in a private collection: Sbath 25, ff. 214–238),[16] and the *Sentences to a Virgin* (preserved in a group of seventeenth and eighteenth century MSS from Aleppo).[17]

Finally, Géhin discusses texts attributed to Evagrius but whose authenticity and/or survival is in question. Among them are: three treatises reported to be in a Garshuni manuscript, which is no longer extant;[18] the only previously documented complete Arabic copy of the *Kephalaia gnostika* recorded in a manuscript at the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo, which has also gone missing;[19] an inauthentic treatise *On the Teachers and their Disciples* preserved in a

15 Géhin, "La tradition arabe d'Évagre le Pontique."

16 Paul Sbath, *Bibliothèque de Manuscrits Paul Sbath, catalogue*, volume 1 (Cairo: H. Friedrich, 1928), 18–20 (#10), 431.

17 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:399: Vat. ar. 77 and 83; Vat. Borg. ar. 62; Beirut, Bibl. or. 491; Sbath 90, 182, and 787.

18 Ghubayl Dayr al-Banāt 161 (the relevant section dates to the sixteenth century): see J. Nasrallah, *Catalogue des manuscrits du Liban*, volume 2 (Harissa: St. Paul, 1965), 172–174 (#16). The manuscript is missing from later catalogues associated with Ghubayl and the reconstituted collection at l'Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik. Nasrallah identifies the texts as *To Eulogius*, *On Prayer*, and *Antirrhetikus*, but Samir ("Évagre le Pontique dans la tradition arabo-copte," 131, 135–136) calls into question the reliability of his testimony on the first and third of these works.

19 Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate, Theol. 152, ff. 147a–177b (1739 CE; = Copt. Mus. 622); see Graf, *GCAL*, 1:398; Géhin, "La tradition arabe," 95–96. Géhin reports that a colophon on folio 118b provided information about the copyist and provenance for the manuscript. The scribe's name was Sulaymān ibn Ṣa'ad ibn al-Rāhiba, a priest in the Church of the Virgin in Ḥārat

manuscript at the Coptic Museum in Cairo;[20] and an adaptation of the treatise *On the Eight Spirits of Malice* in a manuscript at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris not mentioned by Graf.[21]

1.2 *Editions of Evagrian Works in Arabic*

Despite all this indispensable bibliographical and archival work, only four Arabic editions of Evagrian texts have been published at present. The first is a 1939 publication by Irénée Hausherr of Evagrius' treatise *On Prayer* in both Syriac and Arabic.[22] Hausherr's Arabic edition is based on two manuscripts: one from the Vatican (Vat. Ar. 93, fol. 33b–48a; 13–14th cent.), and the other in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (Par. Ar. 157, fol. 35b–53a; 14th cent.).

The second Arabic edition of an Evagrian work is a 1986 publication by Bishop Samuel al-Suryānī of a single manuscript in the Monastery of the Syrians library (Dayr al-Suryān MS 174), which contains the familiar standardized corpus of Evagriana arabica identified by Graf and Samir principally on the basis of the above-mentioned manuscripts at the Vatican and in Paris.[23] It was this edition that Samir consulted in the preparation of his article on the Copto-Arabic reception of Evagrius. The contents of the published version, however, are not complete. Two works at the end of the manuscript are left out: *In Imitation of Proverbs* (ff. 135a–b) and the *Life of Evagrius* (ff. 136a–143b).

The third edition is a 2006 publication by Paul Géhin of three short Evagrian works: *In Imitation of Ecclesiastes*, *In Imitation of the Song of Songs*, and *In Imitation of Proverbs*.[24] Included as an appendix to his discussion of a Greek manuscript from the Vatican containing other works by Evagrius, Géhin's edi-

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al-Zuwayla al-Kubrā in Cairo, and he completed his work on 28 Kīhak, AM 1455 (= 1739). Géhin does not discuss the four-folio fragment in the Mingana collection (Mingana ar. christ. 212) cited by Graf (*GCAL*, 2:398).

20 Cairo, Coptic Museum 376: see Marcus Simaika, *Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the Principal Churches of Cairo and Alexandria and the Monasteries of Egypt*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Government Press, Būlāq, 1939), 41 (#80); and Graf, *GCAL*, 1:398 (who refers to it as Kopt. Mus. 80, 2).

21 Par. ar. 6857 (dated to 1294): see Gérard Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes: première partie. Manuscrits arabes chrétiens*, volume 2 (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1974), 109–111.

22 Hausherr, "Le 'De Oratione' d'Évagre le Pontique en syriaque et en arabe," 7–71 (Arabic text 21–58).

23 Bishop Samuel, *Mayāmir Mār Ūghrīs* (Cairo: al-Naʿām li-l-Ṭibāʿa wa-l-Tawrīdāt, 1986; repr. 1999). Samir Khalil Samir ("Évagre le Pontique dans la tradition arabo-copte," 129, note 17) reports Tādurus al-Suryānī as a co-edition, but the 1999 reprint of the edition does not credit him.

24 Géhin, "Evagriana d'un manuscript basilien," Arabic text, 76–78; French translation, 78–81.

tion of these three Arabic texts is based on the same two manuscripts from the Vatican and from Paris that Hausherr relied on seven decades earlier (Vat. ar. 93, ff. 134a–136b; and Par. ar. 157, ff. 163a–165b), as well on Bishop Samuel's (incomplete) edition of Dayr al-Suryān MS 174.[25]

A fourth edition containing Evagrius' works is a 2008 Arabic-language publication (reprinted in 2017) by Bishop Mattā'us, the abbot of the Monastery of Syrians. Entitled *The Teachings of Saint Evagrius: On Thoughts and the Wiles of the Devils* (*Taʿālīm Mār Ūghrīs ʿan afkār wa-ḥiyal al-shayāṭīn*), this volume is partially based on readings of three manuscripts in that monastic library (MSS 174, 176, and 178), but to my knowledge it has not previously come to the attention of other Western scholars working on Evagrius.[26] The editorial methods used in transcribing the volume's contents are not disclosed, and there is some evidence for periphrasis and standardization of language with an eye toward accessibility for modern Egyptian readers; thus, the volume should be used as a research source with some caution, preferably with reference to the original manuscripts. In any case, the contents principally follow the familiar rubric of the Evagrian corpus identified by Graf and Samir and confirmed in Bishop Samuel's 1999 edition, framed by a narration of the saint's life and several homiletic, paraenetic, and didactic "selections" (*mukhtārāt*) attributed to him.

Such is the state of the question, with much more work still to be done to identify other manuscripts preserving Evagrius' corpus and to publish editions of his writings copied in Arabic. In what follows, I discuss the prospects for both of these endeavors in relation to my recent cataloguing work at the Monastery of the Syrians in Wādī al-Naṭrūn, Egypt.

2 Arabic Manuscript Witnesses to Evagrius in the Monastery of the Syrians Library Collection

In 2013, I founded a project to catalogue the Coptic and Arabic manuscripts at the Monastery of the Syrians with the permission of Bishop Mattā'us, the abbot of the monastery, and Father Bigoul, at that time the head librarian responsible

25 Ibid. It is evident that Géhin was not able to examine the Dayr al-Suryān manuscript in person and was not aware that the published edition omitted *In Imitation of Proverbs* and the *Life of Evagrius*. As a result, some of Géhin's conclusions are worth revisiting: see Stephen J. Davis, "Evagriana Arabica: Three Works in Imitation of Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Proverbs," paper presented at the 2018 Annual Meeting of the North American Patristics, Chicago, IL (May 26, 2018).

26 Bishop Mattā'us, *Taʿālīm Mār Ūghrīs ʿan afkār wa-ḥiyal al-shayāṭīn* (Maktabat Dayr al-Suryān; Cairo: Imperial Press, 2008; reprint: 2017).

for the collection there.[27] Since December of that year, I have directed a team of scholars who have so far collectively examined over half of the entire Coptic and Arabic collection (around 450 out of approximately 850 volumes).

During our season on site in March 2016, I spent my time cataloguing volumes in the library section of Ascetic Discourses (*nusukiyyāt*) in Arabic, and over the course of that work I encountered and produced entries for five manuscripts containing works by Evagrius Ponticus (Dayr al-Suryān MSS 174–178). Of these five manuscripts, one (MS 174) was the subject of Bishop Samuel's edition and was later commented upon in the scholarship of Samir Khalil Samir and Paul Géhin. That same manuscript, along with two others (MSS 176 and 178), was used selectively by Bishop Mattā'us in his book on Evagrius' *Teachings*, but until now these have not come to the attention of other scholars. To my knowledge, the remaining two volumes (MSS 175 and 177) have only been registered as part of the library's own internal documentation system.

After an intervening season in December 2016, I returned to the monastery in May–June 2017 and discovered three more manuscripts preserving individual Evagrian works: Dayr al-Suryān MSS 184, 185, and 186. Finally, in June 2018, further on-site work revealed yet another manuscript containing works by the same author (Dayr al-Suryān MS 743). None of these four volumes have previously been documented as sources for the reception of Evagrius in Arabic.

In the Appendix to this article, I present a catalogue record for eight of these Evagrian manuscripts (not including MS 186, which contains only short excerpts from his teachings on ff. 66a–76a/*Copt.* 67a–77a) and a summary description structured in three parts: (1) contents; (2) evidence for dating and the identity of scribes, owners, patrons, and restorers (whenever available); and (3) script, organization of quires and folia, and state of preservation. These entries should give readers a textured sense of what will be included in the more comprehensive catalogue volumes currently in preparation, which will feature a slightly different organizational schema based on nine discrete fields of information. Based on these data, and in light of the history of scholarship I discussed in the first section of this article, I now want to draw some conclusions about the importance of these manuscript witnesses for the future study of Evagrius' works in Arabic.

The eight manuscripts catalogued here (Dayr al-Suryān MSS 174–178, 184–185, and 743) significantly expand our knowledge about the reception of Evagrius' writings in Arabic. The evidence for their dating is uncertain, as none have a

27 After Father Bigoul's retirement, he was succeeded by Father Amoun, the current head librarian at Dayr al-Suryān.

scribal colophon providing information about the time of copying. But some information is forthcoming about the dating of their endowments, interventions by readers, and their later restoration. While MSS 185 and 743 bear no dates whatsoever, MS 184 was endowed to the monk Ibrāhīm al-Suryānī in the Coptic month Abīb in the Year of the Martyrs (AM) 1204, equivalent to 1484 CE. MSS 175 and 178 contain readers' notes dated to 1767/68 CE. The restoration of both MSS 175 and 178 took place in the year 1798 CE, and MSS 174–177 identify Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī as the patron/owner (*al-muhtamm*) and/or the restorer. The method of restoration and the replacement hand in MS 184 would also point to him as the restorer of that volume. Thus, it would seem that he was probably responsible for the caretaking of at least six of the manuscripts identified here. Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī (d. 1830) is known to have been active as a monk, priest, and librarian at the Monastery of the Syrians from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth, and by 1798 he was already probably serving as abbot of the community.[28]

The paper used in each volume is of the so-called "Oriental" or Eastern type without watermarks. An earlier librarian, who produced a handwritten in-house catalogue for the collection at the Monastery of the Syrians, speculated that MSS 175 and 178 may date to the thirteenth or fourteenth century. While this cannot be confirmed, it would match the kind of paper used and the time frame of the principal Evagrian manuscripts preserved in Vatican City (Vat. Ar. 93) and in Paris (Par. Ar. 157), both dated to the fourteenth century. What can be said with confidence is that these eight manuscripts probably date between the thirteenth or fourteenth century and the middle of the eighteenth.

The evidence related to scribes and owners/patrons is consistent with this time frame. From colophons and endowments (*waqf*-statements) we have information on the scribes of manuscripts 174 (Shinūda ibn Sulmān Anwar) and 175 (al-Qiss Ghubriyāl from Mārdīn in Syria; and al-Qiss Dāwūd from Diyār Bakr in Turkey), and the owners/patrons of MS 177 (the metropolitan Sāwīrus)

28 On Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī's contributions, see also Bigoul el-Souriany, "The Relation between the Fayoum and the Monastery of al-Suryan in the Late Medieval period," in *Christianity and Monasticism in the Fayoum Oasis*, ed. Gawdat Gabra (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 289–295. For an additional discussion, see Stephen J. Davis, "Marginalia Coptica et Arabica: Traces of Scribes, Patrons, Restorers, and Readers in the Biblical Collection at the Monastery of the Syrians (Dayr al-Suryān)," in *Proceedings of the Eleventh International Congress of Coptic Studies, Claremont, CA, July 25th–30th, 2016* (Louvain: Peeters, forthcoming). The current physical conservation of the manuscripts is directed by Elizabeth Sobczynski and sponsored by the Levantine Foundation (UK), which also funded the construction of the monastery's new library and conservation laboratory (inaugurated in the spring of 2013).

and MS 184 (originally owned by a certain monk named Yūḥannā from the Monastery of St. Macarius, and later transferred into the possession of the priest Ibrāhīm al-Suryānī al-Mashriqī). Unfortunately, these named figures are as yet otherwise unattested in the collection. At this stage of my research, I cannot yet cite them as confirmation of a specific time frame. But the identification of the metropolitan and head of the monastery, Father Quriyāqūs, as the owner-patron of MS 175 is more immediately helpful in this regard: probably a contemporary of Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī, he also makes appearances as a later owner/patron of MS 10 (a copy of the Psalms dated to 1344/45 and restored by Yūḥannā approximately 450 years later) and MS 28 (a copy of the Epistles and Acts dated to 1773).[29]

In terms of their contents, five of the manuscripts (MSS 174–176, 178, 743) expand our database of evidence for the common corpus of Evagrian works previously documented in the manuscripts from the Vatican and Paris (Vat. ar. 93; Par. ar. 157). Here, I will cite Dayr al-Suryān MS 174 as an example, but the same pattern is replicated in MSS 175, 176, and 178. In each of these volumes, the corpus begins with an introduction to the letter of Eulogius (*Lūkiyūs*) to Evagrius and Evagrius' reply (MS 174, ff. 3b–4a), and ends with Evagrius' writings in imitation of Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, and Proverbs (MS 174, ff. 134a–135b) and the *Life of Evagrius* (MS 174, ff. 136a–143b). The bulk of this corpus, however, is organized as an extended *Edifying Discourse from Evagrius to Eulogius* (*Kalām manfaʿa li-l-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī katabahu li-l-qiddīs Anbā Lūkiyūs al-nāsik*; MS 174, 4a–133b), which consists of thirty-five chapters and includes materials from the following works:

– Ch. 1–16: Evagrius' Reply to Eulogius (*Lūkiyūs*) (MS 174, ff. 4a–32a);
– Ch. 17: *On Prayer* (MS 174, ff. 32a–56a);
– Ch. 18: *On the Eight Evil Thoughts* (MS 174, ff. 56a–62a);
– Ch. 19–27: *Antirrhetikos* (MS 174, ff. 62b–113b);
– Ch. 28–35: *On the Eight Spirits of Malice* (MS 174, ff. 113a–133b).

The fragmentary MS 743 follows this same pattern, containing Evagrius' correspondence with Eulogius and the beginning of the *Edifying Discourse*, but it breaks off in the middle of chapter 11. The rest of the manuscript's original contents are lost, but it is likely that they would have continued the familiar chapter sequence outlined above. Thus, these five Dayr al-Suryān volumes largely replicate the contents of the common corpus, thereby more than doubling the number of surviving manuscript attestations.

29 In the case of MS 10, Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī is also identified as its early modern restorer.

The other three manuscripts catalogued here (MSS 177, 184, 185) provide evidence for different patterns in the transmission and reception of Evagrius' individual works. On the one hand, MS 185 preserves a copy of his *Reply to/Treatise for the Monk Eulogius* (MS 185, pp. 279–300; *Copt.* 206b–217a), which is collected with a miscellaneous assortment of other ascetic discourses (including letters, canons, and sayings attributed to Philoxenos, Antony, Pachomius, Clement (*Iklīmādūs*), John of the Thebaid, Theodore, Isaiah, Shenoute, John Cassian, John Chrysostom, Stephen of the Thebaid, and Jacob of Sarug). Here, Evagrius is taken up as one voice in the larger chorus of early Christian fathers.

On the other hand, in MSS 177 and 184, we find two cases where Evagrius' works, even while being incorporated into larger collections of materials from the desert fathers, are transmitted specifically in tandem with the writings of John Saba, the Spiritual Elder (*al-Shaykh al-rūḥānī*). This pairing seems to have been motivated by considerations of genre: in each case, the volumes juxtapose works by these two authors under the title *Chapters of Knowledge* (*Ru'ūs al-maʿrifa*).[30] In the case of MS 177, the two authors appear at the beginning of the volume (John Saba at ff. 1b–55a; Evagrius at ff. 57b–115b), followed by sayings of St. Basil (f. 119a–b), a *maymar* by Mar Isaac the Syrian (ff. 121b–131a), and an anonymous treatise on the *Economy of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Salvation of Adam from the Captivity of Satan* (ff. 132a–136a). In the case of MS 184, John Saba (ff. 116a–148a) and Evagrius (ff. 150b–183b) appear at the end, after works by Mar Isaiah, John and Stephen of the Thebaid, Mar Isaac, Macarius the Great, and the anthology of monastic sayings that passed under the title the *Garden of the Monks* (*Bustān al-ruhbān*). In this case, their *Chapters of Knowledge* are supplemented by one other short work by each author: John Saba's correspondence with his brother at the Coenobion Monastery (ff. 148a–150a) and the first folio of a treatise *On Beauty* by Evagrius (f. 184a–b, incomplete). The significance of this micro-corpus of Sabaite and Evagrian *Chapters of Knowledge* is worth our special attention, especially given what we know about the vexed history of transmission when it comes to Evagrius' writings.

30 On John Saba's authorship of this treatise entitled *Chapters of Knowledge*, see Graf, *GCAL*, 1:434–436. In addition to these two MSS (177 and 184), the Dayr al-Suryān collection contains eight other manuscripts (MSS 159–166) containing this work, either in part or in full: see MSS 159, ff. 122a–135a (ch. 1–3); MS 160, ff. 122b–133b (ch. 1–3); MS 161, ff. 168b–181b (ch. 1–3; see also ff. 182b–216b [ch. 3–7]), MS 162, ff. 141b–153a (ch. 1–3); MS 163, ff. 163a–175a (ch. 1–3; see also ff. 175a–205b [ch. 3–6, incomplete]); MS 164, ff. 267a–269b (ch. 1, incomplete); MS 165, ff. 161a–174b (ch. 1–3); and MS 166, ff. 146b–159b (ch. 1–3).

Evagrius' *Chapters of Knowledge* is better known to scholars as the *Kephalaia Gnostika* (*KG*), the third and most advanced installment in his trilogy of works on the monastic life, the first two being *The Ascetic* (*Praktikos*) and *The Gnostic* (*Gnostikos*). The *KG* survives in Greek (its original language of composition) only in a few scattered fragments. This is the case because Evagrius' legacy was posthumously caught up with that of Origen in late antiquity, leading to the condemnation of his theological ideas at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553, after which many of his writings were suppressed and/or destroyed.[31] As a result, a number of his works were preserved only due to their translation into other languages. This is true for the *KG*, which survives in two Syriac recensions—one earlier "unexpurgated" version (S_2) that retains key elements of Origen's thought, and one "expurgated" version (S_1) from which certain suspected Origenist elements were removed.[32] The expurgated Syriac recension would also become the source of an Armenian adaptation and an Arabic translation.[33]

Prior to our work in the Monastery of the Syrians collection, the only complete Arabic copy of the *Kephalaia Gnostika* known to scholars was preserved in a manuscript kept in the Coptic Patriarchal Library in Cairo (Theol. 152, ff. 147a–177b); but, by the first decade of the twentieth century (as noted by Géhin), that copy had been reported lost for some time.[34] Two important observations are in order with respect to this no-longer-extant manuscript. First, Géhin reports that in Copt. Patr. Theol. 152, Evagrius' *Chapters of Knowledge* (*Ru'ūs al-maʿrifa*) had followed upon a copy of John Saba's work by the same name (ff. 1a–146b). This means that we have evidence for at least three manuscripts in which

31 For a historical treatment of the initial controversy that broke out in the late fourth century over Origen's thought, see Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). On the later controversy over Origen and Evagrius in the sixth century under the emperor Justinian, see Aloys Grillmeier, with Theresia Hainthaler, *Christ in the Christian Tradition, Volume 2: From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604), Part Two: The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century*, trans. P. Allen and J. Cawte (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 385–410.

32 For a critical edition of the unexpurgated version (S_2), see Guillaumont, *Les six centuries*; for an English translation, see Ramelli, *Evagrius's* Kephalaia Gnostika. For editions of the expurgated version (S_1), see Frankenberg, *Evagrius Ponticus*; and Guillaumont, op. cit.

33 On the Armenian version of the *KG*, see Robin Darling Young, "The Armenian Adaptation of Evagrius' *Kephalaia Gnostika*," in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. R.J. Daly (Leuven: Peeters, 1992), 535–541.

34 Géhin, "La tradition arabe," 95–96. Graf (*GCAL*, 2:398) also reported on a fragmentary copy (consisting of only four MS leaves) in Mingana ar. christ. 212, probably dating to around the fourteenth century.

the *Kephalaia gnostika* by John Saba and Evagrius Ponticus were transmitted together, enough to confirm a scribal pattern of practice. Second, the fact that the manuscript in the Coptic Patriarchate is now lost means that our copies of Evagrius' *Kephalaia* in Dayr al-Suryān MSS 177 and 184 represent, at present, *the only two complete surviving copies known to exist in the Arabic language*.

One important priority for the future will be the preparation of a critical edition and the task of evaluating the Arabic translation in relation to the Syriac textual tradition.[35] Commenting on the now-lost copy of the *Kephalaia* in Copt. Patr. Theol. 152, Géhin writes that "there is little doubt that this Arabic translation was based on the common Syriac version S1 [i.e., the expurgated recension], and not on the S2 version [i.e., the unexpurgated recension]." A preliminary examination of Dayr al-Suryān MSS 177 and 184 confirms that both do, in fact, appear to be versions of the expurgated text where Origen's thought is muted (albeit still present in good measure). Further study will be required to determine their relationship to the Syriac witnesses. The preparation of a critical edition of the Arabic *Kephalaia gnostika* will complement our work of cataloguing the Evagrian corpus at the Monastery of the Syrians, affording scholars the opportunity to track in closer detail the specific contours of Evagrius' history of reception—and perhaps by extension, the faint traces of Origen's thought as well—from Syriac into Arabic.[36]

35 Géhin, "La tradition arabe," 96.

36 One possible avenue for this research into the Arabic reception of Evagrius is the translation of sometimes-idiosyncratic philosophical terms. One example, from *Kephalaia gnostika* 1.1, is the Arabic translators' decision to employ the term *al-azaliyya* ("existence from eternity") to translate the Syriac word for "essence" (*ītūthā*; ~ Gr. *ousia* or *hupostasis*): see Dayr al-Suryān MS 177, f. 57b; and MS 184, f. 150b; cf. Guillaumont, *Les six centuries*, 16. In this context, the Arabic word *jawhar* ("essence, substance") would be more expected: see Manfred Ullmann, *Wörterbuch zu den griechisch-arabischen Übersetzungen des 9. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 2002), 484–485; and Manfred Ullmann, *Wörterbuch zu den griechisch-arabischen Übersetzungen des 9. Jahrhunderts, Supplement*, Band 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 2006), 817–818. Usually, in Greco-Arabic translations of Aristotle and other Greek philosophical authors, the term *al-azaliyya*, or its adjectival counterpart *azalī*, would be used as an (approximate) equivalent to the Greek noun *to aidion* ("that which is eternal"), the related adjective *aidios*, or its synonym *aiōnios*: Gerhard Endress and Dimitri Gutas, eds., *A Greek and Arabic Lexicon (GALex): Materials for a Dictionary of the Medieval Translations from Greek into Arabic*, fasc. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 208–209; see also Ullmann, *Wörterbuch, Supplement*, Band 1, 72 and 79, where the Arabic adjective *sarmadī* translates *aidios*, and the adjectives *dāhir* and *abadī* translate *aiōnios*.

Appendix: Catalogue of Seven Manuscripts with Works by Evagrius Ponticus in the Library at Dayr al-Suryān (MSS 174–178, 184–185)

Catalogue Key

MS Numbering: The library at the Monastery of the Syrians has employed various numbering systems over the last century, traces of which are recorded either in the manuscripts themselves or in one of two handwritten Arabic-language catalogues recorded in notebook form. The primary number is the one used by the library's current classification system.

1 Contents

MS Contents: The contents of each manuscript are provided, with the beginning and ending folia for each work and sometimes for relevant sections. On my method of recording of the different folia numbering systems, see below under "Organization of quires and folia."

2 Evidence for Dating and the Identity of Scribes, Owners, Patrons, and Restorers

Date: Within the collection, manuscripts are dated primarily according to the Coptic calendar, which is calculated according to the *anno martyrum* ("Era of the Martyrs") from year 284 CE, the beginning of Diocletian's reign.

Scribes, Patrons/Owners, and Restorers: Colophons within the manuscripts sometimes supply the names of scribes (Arabic, *nāsikh*, *nāqil*, or *kātib*), along with their provenance and dates. This information has been recorded with folio references. Colophons, endowments, and readers' notes sometimes designate named figures with the Arabic word *muhtamm* ("caretaker, patron"; pl. *muhtammūn*). In these Arabic manuscripts, this word has a range of meanings. Most often, it seems to indicate a "patron" who has funded the production of the manuscript and/or who has donated the manuscript to the library. In this context, it can also mean the original or former owner of the volume. It also sometimes refers either to the original scribe or to a latter-day restorer, who in writing/rewriting and binding/rebinding the text have served as its caretakers. There is extensive evidence within the collection for the work of monks (both named and anonymous) who rebound manuscripts and reinforced or replaced damaged folia. Such premodern or early modern attempts at preservation/restoration are sometimes marked in the texts themselves in the context of endowments or readers' notes, with the restorers identified by name. Most prominent among them is Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī, who (as noted above) was active at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century and whose imprint on the collection is almost ubiquitous.

3 Material, Script, Organization of Quires and Folia, Dimensions and Layout, State of Preservation, Scribal and Readers' Insertions

Material: All of the Arabic manuscripts in the collection utilize paper folia. The weight of the paper is estimated subjectively, according a threefold system of classification (light, medium, or heavy/thick stock). Handmade paper without watermarks is traditionally described as "Oriental" or Eastern paper, which is typically heavier or thicker in stock. Paper with watermarks in the collection tends to indicate a more recent, machine-made product. Where possible, catalogue entries supply information about detected watermarks.

Script: Observations about script include notes on the color of ink (distinguishing text, headings, and scribal dots/punctuation); general characteristics and distinctive letter forms; and relative scale. For the purposes of this catalogue, I typically estimate scale according to height, using a threefold system of classification: small (≤5 mm), medium (approx. 5–8 mm), and large (≥8 mm).

Organization of quires and folia: Folia are numbered according to Coptic uncial (Copt.), Coptic cursive (*Copt.*), and Arabic systems of foliation, which sometimes match and sometimes diverge. In these catalogue entries, recto and verso of folia are indicated by "a" and "b" respectively, following the Arabic language convention. Superscript "bis" and "ter" (see MS 177, f. 61a^{bis} and f. 61ter) are used to indicate repeated individual folia or page numbers within a particular foliation sequence: "bis" indicates the first repetition (i.e., the second appearance of the same number); "ter" indicates the second repetition (i.e., the third appearance of the same number). In the case of manuscripts featuring more than one foliation number sequence, superscript numbers are used to indicate the second and third reiterations of each sequence: thus, f. 1^{2}a would indicate the first folio, recto, of the second foliation sequence, and f. 1^{3}a would indicate the first folio, recto, of the third foliation sequence.

Dimensions and layout: The catalogue provides the dimensions of folia and areas of writing on the page (both height and width) in centimeters, as well as the number of lines per page. In places where a secondary and/or tertiary hand is in evidence (e.g., on replacement pages), these data are supplied for those sections as well, in order to document variations in the manuscript's physical presentation.

State of preservation: This section documents the material, color, and condition of the manuscript cover, binding, and folia, including notes on cover decoration (e.g., tooled and embossed designs), areas of wear (e.g., surfaces,

corners, edges, and spine), the state of the pages, evidence for environmental damage, earlier attempts at restoration, and the need for further preservation.

Scribal and readers' insertions: The catalogue documents selected marginalia written by scribes and later readers, including the inscriptions of names, petitions, prayers, and blessings. Transcriptions and translations of selected passages are occasionally provided.

Dayr al-Suryān MS 174

Old number: 11 Mayāmir; 14-ⲗ

Ascetic Discourses (*Nusukiyyāt*)

1 Contents: Miscellaneous Apocryphal Works and Mayāmir; Ascetic Writings and Life of Evagrius Ponticus

ff. 6a–9b (= Copt. pp. 534–528, running in reverse order from the Arabic numeration): Excerpts from the Gospels of Matthew (or Luke), John, and Mark from the Lectionary associated with the month Amshīr (ⲙⲉϫⲓⲣ).

f. 11a–b (= *Copt.*): Excerpt from the Book of Tobias (*Tūbyā*)

ff. 12a–38a (= *Copt.*): 1 and 2 Esdras

ff. 12a–26a: Book 1

ff. 26b–38a: Book 2

ff. 38b–51a (= *Copt.*): *The Book of the Brahmans* (*Kitāb al-barakhmānisiyyīn*)

Story about a group of ascetics (the *gymnosophistoi*) who meet the Emperor Alexander the Great: cf. Ps.-Callisthenes, *Alexander Romance* (Graf, *GCAL*, 1:545–546).

ف ٣٨ب

قيل من اجل البرخمانسيين انها امه صنعت الزهد وليس ذلك

من قريحتها ولا من ذاتها مثل الرهبان بل نالوا هذا الحظ من فوق

من احكام الله وهكذا هم يعيشون وعلى نهر عغكيس

ff. 51b–66b (= *Copt.*): *Account/Life of St. Zosimus* (*Khabar al-qiddīs al-jalīl wa-l-qissīs al-fāḍil Anbā Zūsīmā*)

ff. 66b–71a (= *Copt.*): *Maymar* attributed to Jacob of Sarug about Abraham and how God and his angels came to his house and proclaimed to him and his wife about [his son] Isaac.

ff. 71b–83b (= *Copt.*): *Maymar* attributed to Jacob of Sarug about Abraham when he brought his son Isaac for the sacrifice.

ff. 84a–113a (= *Copt.*): *Maymar* attributed to Jacob of Sarug about Jonah the prophet, the repentance of the people of the city of Nineveh, and their salvation.
ff. 113b–120b (= *Copt.*): Letter on the virtue of abstinence for everyone, by Mar Elias of Nisibis to his brother al-Shaykh al-Jalīl, Manṣūr Ibn ʿĪsā. The end of the letter is missing. (Graf, *GCAL*, 2:184–185)
ff. 124a–129b (= *Copt.* 134a–139b): *Maymar* said by some of the saints to be read on the evening of the first Sunday of the Fast.
ff. 140a–146b (= *Copt.*): Commandment[s] said by some of the saints to be read on the second Friday at dawn
ff. 147a–194a (= *Copt.*): The translation and exit of the holy fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob from their bodies on 28 Misrā [… including their ascent to the heavens], which the holy father Athanasius the patriarch of Alexandria revealed through the [hand]writing of the holy apostolic fathers, and which was found in the treasury/library of the sciences.
ff. 194b–201b (= *Copt.*): The death of [our] father Isaac and the translation of his soul from his body on 28 Misrā.
ff. 202a–206b (= *Copt.*): The death of our father Jacob, who was called Israel, and his translation in his body on 28 Misrā. The ending of this work is missing.

ff. 3^2b–4^2a: Letter from Eulogius (*Lūkiyūs*) to Evagrius and [Introduction to] Evagrius' response
ff. 4^2a–133^2b (= *Copt.*): *Edifying Discourse from Evagrius to Eulogius the Ascetic* (*Kalām manfaʿa li-l-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī katabahu li-l-qiddīs Anbā Lūkiyūs al-nāsik*), in 35 chapters.
ff. 4^2a–32^2a: Evagrius' Reply to Eulogius
  ff. 4^2a–5^2b: Chapter 1, On Estrangement [from the World] (*al-ghurba*)
  ff. 5^2b–6^2a: Chapter 2, On Vainglory (*al-majd al-baṭṭāl*)
  ff. 6^2a–7^2a: Chapter 3, On Humility (*al-ittiḍāʿ*)
  f. 7^2a: Chapter 4, On Living in Peace (*al-sakan bi-salām*)
  ff. 7^2a–9^2a: Chapter 5, On Peace and Wellbeing (*al-ṣulḥ wa-l-salāma*)
  f. 9^2a–b: Chapter 6, On Patience (*al-ṣabr*)
  ff. 9^2b–10^2b: Chapter 7, On Vigilance and Anxiety of Heart (*al-sahar wa-qalaq al-qalb*)
  ff. 10^2b–11^2a: Chapter 8, On Meekness, Anger, Love, and the Fear of God (*al-daʿa wa-l-ghaḍab wa-l-maḥabba wa-khawf Allāh*)
  f. 11^2a: Chapter 9, On Living in Poverty (*al-ʿaysh bi-maskana*)
  ff. 11^2b–13^2a: Chapter 10, On Rejection [of the World] and Thoughts (*al-rafḍ wa-l-afkār*)

ff. 13²a–14²b: Chapter 11, On Repentance (*al-tawba*)
ff. 14²b–15²a: Chapter 12, [On the Fact that] It Is Prohibited to Judge Your Teacher (*lā yajib an tudīn muʿallimaka*)
ff. 15²a–18²a: Chapter 13, On the Fact that One Should Not Speak with Slander (*lā yataḥaddath fī l-waqīʿa*)
f. 18²a–b: Chapter 14, On Patience and Humility (*al-ṣabr wa-l-ittiḍāʿ*)
ff. 18²b–27²a: Chapter 15, On the Reading on the Nights of the Vigil and Vigilance (*al-qirāʾa fī layālī al-sahar wa-l-sahar*)
ff. 27²a–32²a: Chapter 16, On the Humility of the Soul (*ittiḍāʿ al-nafs*). In this chapter Evagrius enumerates the eight vices (gluttony, fornication, love of money, melancholy, anger, anxiety, vainglory, pride) and the eight virtues (asceticism, self-control, poverty, joy, leisure, patience, hatred of glory, humility).

[ff. 32²a–56²a: Evagrius, *On Prayer*]
ff. 32²a–56²a: Chapter 17, On Withdrawal and the Pure Prayer, which is the speech/conversation of God (*al-tafarrud wa-l-ṣalāh al-ṭāhira allatī hiya mukhāṭabat allāh*). Includes sections on "The First Explanation of the Enumeration" (*awwal sharḥ al-iḥṣāʾ*; f. 47²b) and on "The Eight Thoughts Again" (*al-thamāniyat afkār ayḍan*; f. 50²b).

[ff. 56²a–62²a: Excerpt from Evagrius' treatise *On the Eight Evil Thoughts*]
ff. 56²a–62²a: Chapter 18, On What Happens to Us in Sleep (*mā yaḥduth lanā fī l-nawm*)

[ff. 62²b–113²a: Evagrius, *Antirrhetikos*]
ff. 62²b–64²a: Chapter 19, On the Weapons against the Eight Thoughts (*hawārib al-thamāniyat afkār*)
ff. 64²a–70²b: Chapter 20, On Thoughts of Gluttony (*afkār al-biṭna*)
ff. 70²b–77²b: Chapter 21, On the Thought of Fornication (*fikr al-zināʾ*)
ff. 77²b–83²b: Chapter 22, On the Thought of the Love of Money (*fikr maḥabbat al-fiḍḍa*)
ff. 83²b–90²b: Chapter 23, On Melancholy (*al-kaʾāba*)
ff. 90²b–96²b: Chapter 24, On Thoughts of Anger (*afkār al-ghaḍab*)
ff. 97²a–102²b: Chapter 25, On Thoughts of Anxiety (*afkār al-qalaq*)
ff. 102²b–107²a: Chapter 26, On the Thought of Vainglory (*fikr al-iftikhār*)
ff. 107²a–113²a: Chapter 27, On the Thought of Pride (*fikr al-kibriyāʾ*)

[ff. 113²a–133²b: Evagrius, *On the Eight Spirits of Malice*]
ff. 113²a–115²a: Chapter 28, On Gluttony Again (*al-biṭna ayḍan*)
ff. 115²a–117²b: Chapter 29, On Fornication (*al-zināʾ*)
ff. 117²b–119²a: Chapter 30, On the Love of Money (*maḥabbat al-fiḍḍa*)
ff. 119²a–120²a: Chapter 31, On Anger (*al-ghaḍab*)
ff. 120²a–121²b: Chapter 32, On Melancholy (*al-kaʾāba*)

ff. 121²b–123²a: Chapter 33, On Anxiety (*al-qalaq*)
ff. 123²a–124²a: Chapter 34, On Vainglory (*al-iftikhār*)
ff. 124²a–133²b: Chapter 35, On Pride (*al-kibrỳā'*). Includes a heading on "The Founders of the Religion" (*al-awwalīn al-dīn*; f. 126²b)
ff. 134²a–135²b: Sayings attributed to Evagrius *In Imitation of Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, and Proverbs*.
f. 134²a–b: [*In Imitation of*] *Ecclesiastes* (*min qawl al-kanā'is*)
ff. 134²b–135²a: *In Imitation of the Song of Songs* (*min alladhī qālahu yushbih qawl nashīd al-anshād*)
f. 135²a–b: *In Imitation of the Proverbs of Solomon* (*min amthāl Sulayman*)
ff. 136²a–143²b: *Life of Evagrius* (*sīrat abūnā al-qiddīs al-ṭūbānī anbā Waghrī al-mujāhid al-ʿaẓīm fī l-qiddīsīn*). The ending of this work is missing.

2 Evidence for Dating and the Identity of Scribes, Owners, Patrons, and Restorers

Dates and endowments: No date indicated. Endowed to Dayr al-Suryān (f. 10b).

Scribes: The manuscript contains evidence for 9 scribal hands (6 in the first half of the MS; 3 in the second half), only one of which (hand 2) is associated with a named individual, Shinūda ibn Sulmān Anwar (f. 51a).

Owners/patrons: Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī (f. 10b), identified as *al-muhtamm*.

Restorer: Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī (f. 10b).

3 Material, Script, Organization of Quires and Folia, Dimensions and Layout, State of Preservation, Scribal and Readers' Insertions

Material: Paper. Thick "Oriental"/Eastern stock with no visible watermarks. Pages are yellowed with some stains at the edges.

Script: The manuscript gives evidence of nine different scribal hands.
Hand 1 (ff. 11a–48a, 206a–b)
Hand 2 (ff. 48b–113a, 148a–150b, 160a–b, 191a–205b).
Hand 3 (ff. 113b–120b)
Hand 4 (ff. 124a–125b, 146a–b; = *Copt*. 134a–135b, 146a–b)
Hand 5 (ff. 126a–129b, 140a–145b; = *Copt*. 136a–145b)
Hand 6 (f. 147a–b)
Hand 7 (ff. 3²b–129²b, 131²a–142²b)
Hand 8 (f. 130²a–b)
Hand 9 (f. 143²a–b)

In the first half of the manuscript, hands 1 and 2 seem to be primary, hand 3 is secondary, hand 5 is tertiary, and hands 4 and 6 supply selected replacement pages. In the second half, hand 7 seems to be primary, while hands 8 and 9 supply replacement pages. Below, I provide brief descriptions of the orthography for hands 1, 2, and 7.

Hand 1: Black ink with titles/headings in red (no punctuation). Small rounded letters written neatly and legibly.

Hand 2: Black ink with titles/headings and punctuation in red (but the red punctuation breaks off after folio 56a). Larger script with more extended line flourishes.

Hand 7: Black ink with titles, headings, Coptic cursive numerical references, and punctuation in red ink. Script is medium-to-large in scale with thick, heavy strokes. Legible but not especially consistent.

Organization of quires and folia:
Frontmatter: 1 leaf (f. i)
Numbered folia:
ff. 6–120, 124–129, 140–150, 160, 191–206 (= Copt. [534–528]; *Copt.* 11–120, 134–146, [147], 148–150, 160, 191–206)
ff. 2^2–143^2 (= *Copt.* [2^2], 3^2–98^2, [99^2], 100^2–119^2, [120^2], 121^2–129^2, [130^2], 131^2–135^2, [136^2–143^2])
Backmatter: 0 leaves

The first half of the manuscript starts with folia 6–10: these were originally pages from a Coptic liturgical work inserted in reverse order as evidenced by their original Coptic uncial foliation (Copt. pp. 534–528). They were originally used as frontmatter here, but the Arabic foliator included them in his reckoning. From folio 11 to folio 120 the Arabic and Coptic cursive numbering match each other. Starting with the next folio, pages with a different hand are inserted, with Coptic cursive numbering resuming with 134–139 and the Arabic with 124–129, a misreading of the Coptic cursive, which is corrected starting at Copt. 140. From folio 140–150, 160, 191–206, the two systems coincide again. The second half of the manuscript starts with folio 2^2, which also bears the number 207 (this represents a continuation of the foliation from the first half, which is not maintained beyond that page). While folio 2^2 only has an Arabic number, from folio 3^2 the Arabic and Coptic cursive systems coincide except for replaced or restored pages (ff. 99^2, 120^2, 130^2, 136^2–142^2) and on the final folio (f. 143^2), where only the Arabic foliation is preserved. Quires contain 10 folia (apart from the first quire, which contains 6) and are numbered in Arabic lettering on the first folio of each quire. In the first half of the manuscript, these indications are vis-

ible on folia 21a (*thālitha*), 31a (*rābiʿa*), 51a (*sādisa*), 61a (*sābiʿa*), 71a (*thāmina*), 81a (*tāsiʿa*), 91a (*ʿāshira*), 101a (*ḥādī ʿashara*), and 111a (*thānī ʿashara*). In the second half, they are visible on folia 11^2a (*thāniya*), 21^2a (*thālitha*), 31^2a (*rābiʿa*), 41^2a (*khāmisa*), 51^2a (*sādisa*), 61^2a (*sābiʿa*), 71^2a (*thāmina*), 81^2a (*tāsiʿa*), 91^2a (*ʿāshira*), 101^2a (*ḥādī ʿashara*), and 121^2a (*thālith ʿashara*).

Dimensions of folia: 26×17.5 cm
Area of writing:
Hand 1: 21×12.5 cm; 20 lines/page
Hand 2: 21.5×13 cm; 19–20 lines/page
Hand 7: 20×13 cm; 17 lines/page

State of preservation:
The cover consists of a brown leather binding tooled with a double-lined rectangular border bisected by an X. It is well worn with abrasions and some fraying at the edges. The binding is loose with significant separation at the spine inside both the front and back cover and between quires. There are pages missing in the pagination, and some pages that have internal tears or are now loose. There is evidence for earlier stages of restoration includes the use of strips of paper to reinforce pages at the edges and at the spine. A number of these strips have Arabic handwriting or print on them. Some have become partially detached. The MS is in need of conservation.

Scribal and readers' insertions:
f. 71a: A poem addressed to the scribe is written after the end of the *Maymar* that is attributed to Jacob of Sarug.
f. 3^2a: This folio contains two petitions written by different readers. The first is addressed to Jesus Christ with a request for the forgiveness of the sins of "your servant John" (*ʿabdika Yūḥannā*). The second takes up the lower two-thirds of the page, is written in a much larger hand, and requests prayers from the reader on behalf of the (unnamed) writer.
f. 194^2b: above the Arabic blessing is written the following text in Coptic, ⲥⲱⲧⲏⲣ ⲟ̄ⲟ̄ⲥ̄ ⲡⲛⲟⲩ̈ⲧ (“Savior Lord God”).

Dayr al-Suryān MS 175

Old number: 14 Mayāmir; 3-ʾAB
Ascetic Discourses (*Nusukiyyāt*)

1 Contents: Works by Evagrius Ponticus (Mār Ūghrīs)

f. 1a (= *Copt.* 2a): Letter of Eulogius to Evagrius (*Risālat al-qiddīs Lūkiyus ilā al-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī*)

f. 1a–b (= *Copt.* 2a–b): Response of Evagrius to Eulogius (*Jawāb risālat al-qiddīs Lūkiyus min al-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī*)

ff. 1b–131b (= *Copt.* 2b–132b): *Edifying Discourse from Evagrius to Eulogius* (*Kalām manfaʿa li-l-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī katabahu li-l-qiddīs Anbā Lūkiyūs al-nāsik*). In 35 chapters. (For detailed contents, see MS 174.)

ff. 131b–133b (= *Copt.* 132b–134b): Evagrius, *In Imitation of Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Proverbs*.

ff. 134a–139b (= *Copt.* 135a–140b): *Sayings of the Elders*, collected by Gregory of Nyssa, brother of Basil the Great (*min kalām al-ābāʾ al-qiddīsīn al-shuyūkh manfaʿa wa-taʿlīm wa-taʿziya*)

ff. 140a–238a (= *Copt.* 1^2–95^2, [96–99]): *Garden of the Monks* (*Bustān al-ruhbān*)

ff. 240a–244b: Excerpt from the Acts of the Apostles (11:2–13:39).

2 Evidence for Dating and the Identity of Scribes, Owners, Patrons, and Restorers

Dates and endowments: Before the middle of the 18th century (according to the on-site Arabic handbook record, perhaps 13th or 14th cent.?). No endowments.

f. 133b: a reader's note supplies the date, AM 1484 (= 1767/68)

f. 238b: the date of the restoration of the manuscript is given as AM 1515 (= 1798)

Scribes: al-Qiss Ghubriyāl and al-Qiss Dāwūd from Mārdīn (Syria) and Diyār Bakr (Turkey) (f. 238b)

Owners/patrons: Father Metropolitan Quriyāqūs, the head of the monastery at the time of the manuscript's endowment, is identified as *al-muhtamm*.

Restorers: None identified

3 Material, Script, Organization of Quires and Folia, Dimensions and Layout, State of Preservation, Scribal and Readers' Insertions

Material: Paper. Medium-to-thick stock "Oriental"/Eastern paper. Replacement pages bear a triple crescent moon (Tre Lune) watermark.

Script: Primary script written in a fluent hand in medium-to-large letters. Black ink with headings, punctuation, and section markers in red. Final section with

an excerpt from Acts written in a larger, less practiced hand with thick black lines (punctuation and section markers in red).

Organization of quires and folia:
Frontmatter: 5 leaves (ff. i–v)
Numbered folia: [*wāw*], 2–139, 140–238, 239, 240–244 (= *Copt.* 1–140, 1^2–95^2, [96–99], [blank], 3^3–[7^3]).
Backmatter: 1 leaf (f. 245)

The flyleaves (ff. i, 245) are thin, lightweight modern pieces of paper, with the other halves glued to the inside of the covers. Folio i remains intact/attached its other half; folio 245 has become detached from it because of the complete separation of the pages from the spine at the back of the manuscript (only the front flyleaf remains attached). Folia iii–v are labeled with Arabic letters *jīm*, *dāl*, *hē'*. Folio *Copt.* 1 is labeled with the Arabic letter *wāw*. *Copt.* 1 is labeled with the Arabic number 2, and the numbering continues to be one off up through folio 139 (*Copt.* 140). Folio 140 marks the beginning of a second MS in the same hand, as evidenced by the Coptic cursive foliation which begins again with the number 1 (= *Copt.* 1^2). The Coptic cursive numbering continues up through folio 234 (= *Copt.* 95). After that the Coptic cursive foliation is lacking due to reinforcement of edges with strips of paper (ff. 235–237) or the use of replacement pages (f. 238). Folia 240–244 come from a third MS containing an excerpt from the Acts of the Apostles: the first three bear Coptic cursive numbers (*Copt.* 3^3, 4^3, 5^3); the fourth lacks a number; the fifth has the traces of number 7^3.

Dimensions of folia: 26×18 cm
Area of writing: 20×12 cm; 17 lines/page

State of preservation:
The cover consists of a brown leather binding, somewhat worn with abrasions at the corners and edges. There is a thick double line rectangular incised border, bisected by a thick-lined incised X, and deep medallion stamps at the corners and middle of the rectangular lined border, with four more on the arms of the X and one at its center, adding up to 13 in all. The spine is incised with two X's within rectangular borders, and an incised line down the middle. The manuscript pages are yellowed/discolored. The edges of folia near the front of the manuscript are somewhat tattered. Some have edges and spines reinforced with strips of paper reused from other MSS. The first quire/quinion (10 folia) consists of replacement pages (ff. *wāw*, 1–9; = *Copt.* 1–10). Folia 238 and 239 are

also replacement pages. There is complete separation at the spine at the back of the MS: only the front flyleaf remains attached. The volume is in need of rebinding.

Scribal and readers' insertions:
f. 133b: a reader's note by a certain Mūsā, dated to AM1484, when he came to Dayr al-Suryān as one of 11 brothers, five of whom were monks and the rest laypersons (*ʿalmāniyyīn*). Another note, perhaps in the same hand, has been crossed out and obscured on the same page.

Dayr al-Suryān MS 176
Old number(s): 85 Mayāmir; 181 Musalsal; 9-ΛΒ/86
Ascetic Discourses (*Nusukiyyāt*)

1 Contents: Evagrius Ponticus (Mār Ūghrīs)
f. [*Copt*. 1a–2a]: Letter of Eulogius to Evagrius (*Risālat al-qiddīs Lūkiyus ilā al-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī*)
ff. *Copt*. 2a–3a: Response of Evagrius to Eulogius (*Jawāb risālat al-qiddīs Lūkiyus min al-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī*)
ff. *Copt*. 3a–Ar. 248a: *Edifying Discourse from Evagrius to Eulogius* (*Kalām manfaʿa li-l-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī katabahu li-l-qiddīs Anbā Lūkiyūs al-nāsik*). 35 numbered chapters, plus an added unlabeled section. Chapter 31 is mislabeled as chapter 21 (f. *Copt*. 218b). (For detailed contents, see MS 174.)
ff. *Copt*. 248a–Ar. 270b: Evagrius, *In Imitation of Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Proverbs*.
ff. 262a–265a: Prayer of Saint Ephrem (Mār Ifrām)
f. 265a–b: Prayer/petition to the Virgin Mary

2 Evidence for Dating and the Identity of Scribes, Owners, Patrons, and Restorers
Dates and endowments: No date given. Endowed to Dayr al-Suryān (f. 261a).

Scribes: None identified

Owners/patrons: Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī (f. 261a), identified as *al-muhtamm*.

Restorers: Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī (f. 261a)

3 Material, Script, Organization of Quires and Folia, Dimensions and Layout, State of Preservation, Scribal and Readers' Insertions

Material: Paper. "Oriental"/Eastern paper of rather thick stock. The replacement folia bear the Tre Lune (triple crescent moon) watermark.

Script: Arabic. The primary hand is written in black ink, with headings, section markers, and punctuation in red ink. The script is written in a medium scale with some variation in size and spacing. The letters are fairly clear, although not highly practiced. The replacement folia are written in a small, somewhat squarish script in black ink with section markers in red.

Organization of quires and folia:
Frontmatter: none
Numbered folia: [*Copt.* 1–10], *Copt.* 11–258, Ar. 259–260, [blank unnumbered page], 261, [two blank unnumbered pages], 262–265.
Backmatter: none

The first quire of ten folia consists of later replacement pages, which do not have foliation, but the folia they replace would have originally been labeled 1–10 in Coptic cursive numbering. The original folia begin at the second quire (*Copt.* 11), which is labeled (*thānī*) and continue through the twenty-sixth quire, which consists of only 8 folia (*Copt.* 251–258). The final ten folia are replacement pages that comprise a final quire (ff. 259–260, one blank unnumbered folio, 261, two blank unnumbered folia, 262–265).

Dimensions: 17.5 × 12 cm (replacement pages = 16.5 × 12 cm)
Area of writing: 13 × 9 cm (replacement pages = 12–12.5 × 8.5–9 cm); 12–13 lines/page (replacement pages = 12 lines/page)

State of preservation:
The cover consists of a dark brown leather binding. Very worn with abrasions at the corners and edges, and a perforation in the leather on the spine. Thick, double-line, rectangular incised border, bisected by a thick-lined, incised X. Deep medallion stamps at the corners and middle of the rectangular lined border, with four more on the arms of the X and one at its center, adding up to 13 in all. The folia have experienced considerable water/moisture damage, especially toward the beginning of the volume, where one finds significant discoloration of pages, washed out script (ff. [1–10]), pages that now adhere together and cannot be separated without incurring further damage (esp. *Copt.* 12–13, 14–15, 20–21, 22–23), and possible signs of mold inside the front cover. The internal layers

of some of the pages also show signs of splitting. The binding of the MS is loose with significant separation at the spine inside the front cover and between different quires, with the stitching clearly visible. This is most notable between the eighth and ninth quires (between ff. 180 and 181), where the separation is almost complete. Folia 176 and 177 are also almost completely detached (they are connected by a single thread). Folio 179 is completely detached. The MS is in dire need of conservation. *Copt.* 61 and the final folio (ff. 259–260, one blank unnumbered folia, 261, two blank unnumbered folia, 262–265) are replacement pages.

Scribal and readers' insertions: none noted.

Dayr al-Suryān MS 177

Old number: 86 Lāhūt

Ascetic Discourses (*Nusukiyyāt*)

1 Contents: Miscellaneous Ascetic Works

ff. 1b–55a: al-Shaykh al-Rūḥānī, *Chapters of Knowledge* (*Ruʾūs al-maʿrifa*), ch. 3–7.

ff. 1b–13b: Chapter 3

ff. 13b–24b: Chapter 4

ff. 24b–37b: Chapter 5

ff. 37b–51b: Chapter 6

ff. 51b–55a: Chapter 7

ff. 57b–115b: Evagrius (Mār Ūghrīs), *Chapters of Knowledge* (*Ruʾūs al-maʿrifa*)

ff. 57b–66b: Chapter 1

ff. 66b–73b: Chapter 2

ff. 73b–81a: Chapter 3

ff. 81a–88b: Chapter 4

ff. 89a–96a: Chapter 5

ff. 96b–104a: Chapter 6

ff. 104a–115b: Additional unnumbered chapters

f. 119a–b: *Saying/Teaching of St. Basil the Great on Praying to the East*

ff. 121b–131a: Isaac the Syrian (Mār Isḥaq), *Maymar on Silence*

ff. 132a–136a: *On the Economy of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Salvation of Adam from the Captivity of Satan* (*fī tadbīr sayyidinā Yasūʿ al-Masīḥ fī khalāṣ Ādam min asr al-shayṭān*)

2 Evidence for Dating and the Identity of Scribes, Owners, Patrons, and Restorers

Dates and endowments: No date given. Endowed to Dayr al-Suryān (f. 57a).

Scribes: None identified

Owners/patrons: al-qissīs Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī (f. 56b); al-muṭrān Sāwīrus (f. 121a), each identified as *al-muhtamm*.

Restorers: al-qissīs Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī (f. 56b).

3 Material, Script, Organization of Quires and Folia, Dimensions and Layout, State of Preservation, Scribal and Readers' Insertions

Material: Paper. "Oriental"/Eastern paper, medium-to-thick stock. Replacement folia 1–2 have Tre Lune (triple crescent moon) watermarks.

Script: Arabic. Black ink. Works 1, 2, and 4 seem to be by the same hand. Letters of small-to-medium height with bold, thick strokes. Script is inconsistent and cramped at times. Headings, rare punctuation, and occasional marginal notes/commentary in red ink. Work 3 is written a different hand in thicker, lighter, smudgy black ink with slightly smaller letters. Work 5 is written by yet another hand, in dark black ink with bold, thick strokes and even smaller, cramped letters written in closely spaced lines. No red ink is used in either work 3 or work 5.

Organization of quires and folia:
Frontmatter: 4 leaves (ff. i–iv)
Numbered folia: ff. 1–57, 57bis, 58–61, 61bis, 61ter, 62–144a (= *Copt*. 1–56, [5 folia unnumbered], 61–134, [8 folia unnumbered])
Backmatter: none (the pages used for backmatter are all numbered in Arabic)

The Arabic foliation includes the repetition of a number (57, 57bis) at the place where the second work in the MS begins. This is the result of the combination of folia from two separate texts. At that point, the Coptic cursive foliation also diverges from the Arabic, beginning again at 54 and then temporarily (f. 57 = *Copt*. 54bis; f. 57bis = *Copt*. 55bis; f. 58 = no *Copt*.; f. 59 = no *Copt*; f. 60 = no *Copt*.). After this, there are three folios labelled 61 in the Arabic foliation (61 = no *Copt*., 61bis = no *Copt*.; 61ter = *Copt*. 61). The Arabic and Coptic cursive numbering then remain in sync from 62 to 134, but both system skip the number 120. After that,

there is no more Coptic cursive numbering. The Arabic numbering continues through to the end of the MS, including the page glued to the inside of the back cover.

The front inside cover is lined with a page reused from an earlier Arabic manuscript, and glued upside down in relation to the MS: the page contains part of the parable of The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32, at vss. 16–24) The front-matter (ff. i–iv) consists of reused MS pages from a copy of the Gospel of Acts (the heading "Chapter 27" is on folio ii^{b}); these pages are oriented sideways/perpendicular to the pages of the MS. Folia 1–2 are replacement pages. Starting at 137, the folia are older MS pages used for binding the volume. Folia 137 and 140 seem to derive from the same MS as the front inside cover containing the excerpt from the Gospel of Luke, although here they right side up. Folia 138 and 139 seem to derive from the same manuscript as folia i–iv containing the Gospel of Acts. They are likewise oriented sideways/perpendicular to the pages of the MS, and folio 138b contains the heading "Chapter 37."

Dimensions: 16 × 12 cm
Area of writing:
ff. 1b–55a, 57b–115b, 121b–131a: 12.5–13 × 9–9.5 cm; 14–18 lines/page
f. 119a–b: 14–14.5 × 11–11.5 cm; 15–18 line/page
ff. 132a–136a: 14.5–15.5 x. 11–11.5 cml 19–21 lines/page

State of preservation:
The cover consists of an old brown leather binding, very worn with abrasions at the corners and edges. There is a thick double line rectangular incised border, bisected by a thick-lined incised X, with deep medallion stamps at the corners and middle of the rectangular lined border, and four more on the arms of the X and one at its center, adding up to 13 in all. The manuscript binding is fairly loose with some separation at the spine inside the covers and between quires, with stitching visible. Some pages are stained, and there is evidence for attempts to reinforce page edges near the spine with small strips of paper and glue.

Scribal and readers' insertions:
f. 1b: The incipit for chapter three of the first work notes that it was excerpted, abridged, and translated by al-qiddīs al-qiss al-fāḍil al-ḥabīs Anbā Yūḥannā [i.e., John Saba] from the Syriac.
f. 10b: marginal comment in red ink

ff. 55a–56b: There is a colophon containing an extended scribal lesson/blessing following chapter 7 of the first work. In it, the scribe addresses the author Yūḥannā (John Saba) in the 2nd-person singular, and makes a reference to one of the *Apophthegmata* pertaining to children and the end of Scetis. The statement concludes with a petition to the reader to remember "the one who translated it from Syriac into Arabic."

كلمن قرأ يذكر الذي نقله من
السرياني إلى العربي أن يحمله الرب بجميع
المواهب بشفاعة القديسين أمين
ولربنا المجد دائما أبدًا سرمديًا

f. 119a: at the top of the folio is written the following in Coptic: ⲫⲁⲡⲱⲥ ⲫⲁⲙⲉⲙⲓ
f. 141a: folio included in the backmatter contains verses from Paul in praise of Christ and headed by the following Coptic blessing: ϧⲉⲛⲫⲣⲁⲛ ⲛ̀ⲧⲟⲣⲓⲁⲥ ⲉⲑ̅ⲩ̅ ⲟⲩⲛⲟⲩϯ ⲛ̀ⲟⲩⲱⲧ

***Dayr al-Suryān* MS 178**

Old number: 85 Lāhūt Mayāmir; 12-ʞʒ/296
Ascetic Discourses (*Nusukiyyāt*)

1 Contents: Ascetic Works by Evagrius Ponticus (Mār Ūghrīs) and John Cassian, with Assorted Monastic Homilies and the Letter of Hermes the Wise.

f. 2a–b (no *Copt.*): Letter of Eulogius to Evagrius (*Risālat al-qiddīs Lūkiyus ilā al-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī*)
ff. 3a–4a (= no *Copt.*): Response of Evagrius to Eulogius (*Jawāb risālat al-qiddīs Lūkiyus min al-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī*)
ff. 4b–100a (no *Copt.*; 12a–100a): *Edifying Discourse from Evagrius to Eulogius* (*Kalām manfaʿa li-l-qiddīs Anbā Waghrī katabahu li-l-qiddīs Anbā Lūkiyūs al-nāsik*). (For detailed contents, see MS 174.)
ff. 100b–130a (= *Copt.*): John Cassian, *Homily on the Eight Evil Thoughts*, which he sent to the bishop of Rome.

ميمر وضعه القديس أنبا قسيان
وأرسله إلى أسقف رومة من
أجل الثمانية أفكار الشريرة

ff. 130b–133b: Homily of the Elder on the Apprenticing Brothers (*al-ikhwa al-mubtadi'īn*)
ff. 133b–136b: *Maymar* by Evagrius
ff. 136b–147a: *Maymar* by Dorotheus (*Dūrtā'ūs*)
ff. 147a–149b: Another *maymar* by Dorotheus
ff. 149b–150a: *Maymar* by John the Little
f. 150a–b: *Maymar* by Anbā Joseph (Yūsuf)
ff. 151a–160b: Letter of Hermes the Wise, in 13 chapters

رسالة كتبها الحكيم الفاضل هرمس فيها
اداب رياضات وهي تلتة عشر فصلا

2 Evidence for Dating and the Identity of Scribes, Owners, Patrons, and Restorers

Dates and endowments: Before the 18th century (perhaps 13th or 14th cent.?). No endowments.
Reader's note (f. 133b): AM 1484 (= 1767/68).
Restoration of the MS (f. 238b): AM 1515 (= 1798).

Scribes: None identified

Owners/patrons: Original owner was Yūḥannā, a monk from the Monastery of St. Macarius; it was later transferred into the possession of the priest Ibrāhīm al-Suryānī al-Mashriqī.

Restorers: None identified by name, but the method of restoration (and the replacement hand) suggest Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī (late eighteenth century).

3 Material, Script, Organization of Quires and Folia, Dimensions and Layout, State of Preservation, Scribal and Readers' Insertions

Material: Paper. Thick Eastern stock with no visible watermarks. The replacement folia (ff. 1–7) feature triple crescent moon (Tre Lune) watermarks. The front- and backmatter, respectively, have Andrea Galvani Pordenone watermarks, some of which feature a man-in-the-moon framed by a shield or crest.

Script: Arabic. Small primary hand in black ink, somewhat cramped in style, with thick, semi-practiced strokes. Headings and punctuation marks in red ink. Replacement folia 8–10 are written in a medium hand with squarish letters (black ink, with section markers in red).

Organization of quires and folia:
Frontmatter: 3 leaves (ff. i–iii)
Numbered folia: 1–160 [= (no *Copt.*), 12–160]
Backmatter: 3 leaf (f. 161–163)

The Coptic cursive numbering begins on folio 12 and remains in sync with the Arabic throughout the rest of the MS. The quires contain ten folia each and the folia are labeled on the verso of the first folio of the quire beginning at the third quire (f. 21, 31, etc.)

Dimensions: 17 × 13.5 cm
Area of writing: 13.5–4 × 9–9.5 cm; 15 lines/page.

State of preservation:
Cover consists of a light brown leather binding, slightly worn with abrasions at the corners and edges. There is a thick double-line rectangular incised border, bisected by a thick-lined incised X, with deep medallion stamps at the corners and middle of the rectangular lined border, and four more on the arms of the X and one at its center, adding up to 13 in all. The spine is incised with two X's within rectangular borders. The manuscript pages are in reasonably good shape, and the binding is intact, although there is some cracking of the leather on the spine.

Scribal and readers' insertions:
There are assorted marginal notes and corrections evident throughout the manuscript, some written in the scribe's hand and some added in a later hand. In addition, the following scribal and readers' insertions are worthy of note.
f. 1a: A later reader has written the following note:

القلب الذي في الله هو يطلب ان يعطى النفس

f. 130a: There is a short blessing after the text by Cassian.
f. 150b: There is a short blessing after the Monastic Homilies and Sayings.

Dayr al-Suryān MS 184
Old number: 17 Mayāmir; 67 Mayāmir; 4-ΛΒ
Ascetic Discourses (*Nusukiyyāt*)

1 Contents: Miscellaneous Ascetic Discourses

ff. 1a–44b (*Copt.* [2a]–45b): The teachings of Saint Mar Isaiah

ff. 45a–51a (*Copt.* 46a–52a): Discourses of John and Stephen of the Thebaid (*al-Tabā'īsī*).

ff. 45a–47a (*Copt.* 46a–48a): From the discourse of Saint John of the Thebaid (*Yūḥannā al-Tabā'īsī*)

ff. 47a–51a (*Copt.* 48a–52a): From the discourse of Saint Stephen (*Iṣṭifān*) of the Thebaid

ff. 51a–56b (*Copt.* 52a–57b): From the discourse of Saint Mar Isaac

ff. 56b–72b (*Copt.* 57b–73b): The Letters, Sayings, and Teachings of Saint Macarius the Great

ff. 56b–62b (*Copt.* 57b–63b): The Letters of Saint Macarius the Great

ff. 63a–72b (*Copt.* 64a–73b): Sayings and Teachings of Saint Macarius the Great

ff. 73b–115b (*Copt.* [1^2b]–43^2b): The Garden [of the Monks], an abridged collection of stories

ff. 74b–76a (*Copt.* 2^2b–4^2a): Discourse of Saint John of the Thebaid

ff. 76a–78b (*Copt.* 4^2a–6^2b): Discourse of Saint Stephen of the Thebaid

ff. 79a–80b (*Copt.* 7^2a–8^2b): Saying(s) of Saint Isaiah

ff. 80b–84b (*Copt.* 8^2b–12^2b): Discourse of Saint Mar Isaac

ff. 84b–88b (*Copt.* 12^2b–16^2b): Letters of Saint Macarius the Great

ff. 89a–90a (*Copt.* 17^2a–18^2a): Commandments of Saint Anthony to the monks at the Monastery of Naqlūn

f. 90a–b (*Copt.* 18^2a–b): Saying(s) of Saint Barsanuphius (*Barṣanūfiyūs*)

f. 90b (*Copt.* 18^2b): Saying of Saint Simeon the Stylite (*Sim'ān al-'Amūdī*)

ff. 90b–92b (*Copt.* 18^2b–20^2b): Discourse of the Saint known as the Elder (*al-shaykh*)

ff. 92b–115b (*Copt.* 20^2b–43^2b): Questions and Answers, Stories and Sayings of the Holy Fathers. This section includes sayings by Palladius, Pachomius, Barsanuphius, Macarius, Ephrem, Anthony, Isaiah, and Serapion, among other anonymous teachings.

ff. 116a–148a (*Copt.* 191^3a–223^3a): The Spiritual Elder (*al-Shaykh al-rūḥānī*; = John Saba), *Chapters of Knowledge*. Treatises 3–7, said to be translated from Syriac to Arabic by John [Saba], the former of which was by the hand of Elias [of Nisibis].

- ff. 116a–122b (*Copt.* 191^3a–197^3b): Treatise 3
- ff. 122b–129b (*Copt.* 197^3b–204^3b): Treatise 4
- ff. 129b–137a (*Copt.* 204^3b–212^3a): Treatise 5
- ff. 137a–145b (*Copt.* 212^3a–220^3b): Treatise 6
- ff. 145b–148a (*Copt.* 220^3b–223^3a): Treatise 7

ff. 148a–150a (*Copt*. 223^{3}a–225^{3}a): Correspondence between the Elder and his brother

f. 148a–b (*Copt*. 223^{3}a–b): Letter from the Elder to his brother in the body who was at the Coenobion Monastery (Dayr Kanūbiyūn)

رسالة الشيخ الى عند اخيه الجسداني الذي كان في دير كنوبيون

ff. 148b–150a (*Copt*. 223^{3}b–225a): The apology of the saint's brother

اعتذار اخو القديس الجسداني كتبه ليعرف كيف صار سبب هذا

ff. 150b–183b (*Copt*. 225^{3}b–258^{3}b) Evagrius Ponticus, *Chapters of Knowledge*
- ff. 150b–156b (*Copt*. 225^{3}b–231^{3}b): First Cento (*al-māʾa al-ūlā*)
- ff. 156b–161b (*Copt*. 231^{3}b–236^{3}b): Second Cento (*al-māʾa al-thāniya*)
- ff. 161b–166b (*Copt*. 236^{3}b–241^{3}b): Third Cento (*al-māʾa al-thālitha*)
- ff. 166b–171b (*Copt*. 241^{3}b–246^{3}b): Fourth Cento (*al-māʾa al-rābiʿa*)
- ff. 171b–175b (*Copt*. 246^{3}b–250^{3}b): Fifth Cento (*al-māʾa al-khāmisa*)
- ff. 176a–180b (*Copt*. 251^{3}a–255^{3}b): Sixth Cento (*al-māʾa al-sādisa*)
- ff. 180b–183b (*Copt*. 255^{3}b–258^{3}b): Also by Saint Evagrius, *Chapters of Knowledge*

وايضا للقديس انبا اوغريس على رؤوس المعرفة

f. 184a–b (*Copt*. 259^{3}a–b): Evagrius, *On Beauty*. Incomplete (ending missing).

وله ايضا على الجمال

2 Evidence for Dating and the Identity of Scribes, Owners, Patrons, and Restorers

Dates and endowments: No date for the MS itself. Endowed to the monk Ibrāhīm al-Suryānī in the month Abīb, AM 1204 (= 1484) (f. 73a).

Scribes: None identified

Owners/patrons: f. 73a (*Copt*. [1^{2}a]): original owner was Yūḥannā, a monk from the Monastery of St. Macarius; transferred into the possession of the priest Ibrāhīm al-Suryānī al-Mashriqī.

Restorers: None identified by name, but the method of restoration and the replacement hand suggest Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī.

3 Material, Script, Organization of Quires and Folia, Dimensions and Layout, State of Preservation, Scribal and Readers' Insertions

Material: Paper. Original folia are of thick, Eastern stock with no visible watermarks. The replacement folia (ff. 1–7) feature Tre Lune watermarks. The front- and backmatter, respectively, have Andrea Galvani Pordenone and man-in-the-moon-in-a-shield watermarks.

Script: Arabic. Blank ink, with red headings. One or two scribal hands in evidence, plus the replacement hand of a restorer (probably Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī). The first hand (ff. 8–115), of medium scale, is somewhat variable: clearly rendered with rounded well-spaced strokes toward the beginning, it becomes more rushed and cramped midway through and then returns to being more fluidly rendered in the later folia. The second hand (ff. 116–184), also of medium scale, could possibly be by the same scribe, but it is probably not: the letter shapes are more vertically oriented with more abundant use of red ink for headings, punctuation/dots, reference markers, and marginal commentary (especially in the final section with Evagrius' *Chapters of Knowledge*). The replacement hand (ff. 1–7) is of small-to-medium scale with squarer letter forms.

Organization of quires and folia:
Frontmatter: 4 leaves (ff. i–iv)
Numbered folia: ff. 1–72 (= *Copt.* [2–6], 7–[73]), ff. 73–115 (= *Copt.* 1^2–43^2), ff. 116–184 (= *Copt.* 191^3–259^3).
Backmatter: 5 leaves (ff. 185–189)

The manuscript features three different Coptic cursive foliation sequences. The first originally ran up to *Copt.* 73. The second sequence started again at *Copt.* 1^2 and continued through *Copt.* 43^2. The third began at *Copt.* 191^3 and continued through *Copt.* 259^3. A modern Arabic foliation schema bridges these three and provides a continuous sequence from 1 to 184. Folia 1–7 (*Copt.* [2–6], 7–8) are replacement pages. The secondary hand is smaller in scale and more closely packed than the original scribal hand. As a result, the contents of the replacement pages at the beginning of the manuscript take up one fewer folio (7) than the original folia (8), now lost. This is part of the reason for the discrepancy in the foliation between the Coptic cursive and Arabic numbering, but the restorer contributed to this confusion by providing mismatched Coptic cursive numbers for folia 6–7 (*Copt.* 7–8), which matched them with what followed but not with what preceded.

In the first part of the manuscript (ff. 1–72), quires of ten folia each are labeled on the recto of the first folio in the quire, beginning with folio 10a (= *Copt*. 11a), which is labeled as the second quire (*al-thāniya*), and continuing through the seventh quire (f. 60a; = *Copt*. 61a). The second part of the manuscript (ff. 73–115), written in a different hand does not have quire labels. The third part (ff. 116–184) occasionally shows evidence of quire labels on every tenth folio, but they are not fully preserved since the pages seem to have been cut down to size to match the dimensions of the folia in the first part of the MS.

Dimensions: 24.5 × 16 cm
Area of writing:
ff. 8–115: 19.5 × 12 cm
ff. 116–184: 20 × 12.5
Lines per page:
ff. 8–72: 15 lines/page
ff. 73–115: 16 lines/page
ff. 116–184: 17 lines/page

State of preservation:
Red leather cover, well worn, completely detached from the spine/pages. Significant looseness/separation between quires, with various loose pages. An early modern restoration involved use of scotch tape and strips of paper used to reinforce pages along their edges at the spine. Some of these strips of paper have remnants of writing. Others were used to provide space for replacement writing: on folio 14a (*Copt*. 15a), a restorer has pasted a paper over the top 9.5 cm of the page and rewritten the textual contents on it. The manuscript is in need of modern conservation.

Scribal and readers' insertions:
f. 20a (Copt. 21a): a reader has written a prayer for remembrance in the top margin. Part of it has been erased and only the first three words remain: *Udhkur yā rabb ʿabdaka*.
f. 62b (Copt. 63b): after the letters of Macarius the Great, the scribe appends a petition to the reader and to God for remembrance.
f. 62b (Copt. 63b): a reader has written a note on "the illnesses of sin" (*ʿilal al-khaṭiyya*) and lists twelve great sins.
f. 72b (Copt. 73b): after the sayings and teachings of Macarius the Great, the scribe appends a petition for remembrance.
ff. 143a–145a (Copt. 218[3]a–220[3]a): a reader has written several notes and corrections into the text in graphite pencil.

Dayr al-Suryān MS 185
Old number: 60 Lāhūt; 7-ΚΗ/164
Ascetic Discourses (*Nusukiyyāt*)

1 Contents: Mar Philoxenos and Other Assorted Ascetic Discourses
pp. 1–120 (*Copt.* 1b–122a): Letter of Joseph Philoxenos (*Yūsuf Fīluksīnūs*) on the three grades of the monastic life

رسالت الاب انبا يوسف فيلكسينوس الذي كتبها البعض تلاميذه منجل رتب الرهبنة الثلثة الجسدانية والنفسانية والرحانية

pp. 121–125 (*Copt.* 122b–124b): The Canons of St. Anthony, which he established for the monks at the Monastery of Naqlūn

القوانين التي وضعها القديس انطونيوس لاولاده الرهبان بدير النقلون

pp. 125–143 (*Copt.* 124b–134b) Teaching(s) of Saint Pachomius, father of the [monastic] communities

تعليم القديس اب المجامع انبا بخوم

pp. 144–148 (*Copt.* 135a–137a): The Canons of Clement (*Iklīmādūs*), for those entering the monastic life

القوانين التي قالها اكليمادوس للداخلين في الرهبنة

pp. 148–158 (*Copt.* 137a–142a): Letter (*Ṣaḥīfa*) of Saint John of the Thebaid

صحيفة القديس يوحنا التبايسي

pp. 158–173 (*Copt.* 142a–149b): A few chapters from the teachings of the powerful father Isaiah

رؤوس قلايل من تعاليم الاب القدير اشعيا

[*Copt.* 150 is missing from the MS]

pp. 174–194 (*Copt.* 151a–174a): Unidentified ascetic discourse (missing its first folio with its title): containing headings in red addressing an intelligent person,

and on topics such as repentance, taking account of one's soul, sin compared to fire, guarding one's tongue

pp. 194–196 (*Copt.* 174a–175a): Letter from Father Theodore, the disciple of St. Pachomius

رسالة من الاب تادرس تلميذ القديس بخوميوس

pp. 197–248 (*Copt.* 165b–191a): From the sayings of the holy fathers

من اقوال الابا القديسين

pp. 249–278 (*Copt.* 191b–206a): Teachings of Saint Isaiah, commandments to the monks

من تعاليم القديس انبا اشعيا وصايا للرهبان

pp. 279–300 (*Copt.* 206b–217a): Evagrius Ponticus, Book written to Anbā Eulogius

من كتاب انبا وغري المتوحد الذي كتبه الى انبا اولاجيوس عندما كتب اليه يسأله ان يكتب له

pp. 301–318 (*Copt.* 217b–226a) Canons of Saint Shenoute

قوانين الاب القديس انبا شنودي الذي وضعها لاولاده الرهبان

pp. 319–326 (*Copt.* 226b–230a) Saying(s) of some monks

من قول بعض الرهبان

pp. 326–353 (*Copt.* 230a–243b): Teachings of Saint Isaiah

تعاليم القديس انبا (ا)شعيا

pp. 354–373 (*Copt.* 244a–253b): John Cassian, Book of Detachment/Isolation

كتب اقوال القديس انبا قيسان... كتاب الافراز

pp. 374–376 (*Copt.* 254a–255a): From the saying(s) of Anba Isaiah

من قول انبا اشعيا ايضا

pp. 376–388 (*Copt.* 255a–261a) Sayings of Father Anthony the Great

من أقوال العظيم الاب انطونيوس

pp. 388–392 (*Copt.* 261a–263a): John Chrysostom, On Envy

للقديس يوحنا الذهب على الحسد

pp. 393–394 (*Copt.* 263b–264a): Writing by Saint Stephen of the Thebaid (*al-Tabā'isī*)

للقديس استافنوس التبايسي

pp. 394–395 (*Copt.* 264a–b): Writing by Saint Pachomius the Great

للقديس انبا بخوم الكبير

pp. 395–402 (*Copt.* 264b–268a): Saying(s) of the Father Elders on Detachment/Isolation for the Benefit of the Soul

من قول الابا الشيوخ على الافراز لمنفعة النفس

pp. 403–445 (*Copt.* 268b–289b): *Maymar* from the saying(s) of Mar Jacob, bishop of Sarug

ميمر من قول الاب ماريعقوب اسقف سروج

2 Evidence for Dating and the Identity of Scribes, Owners, Patrons, and Restorers

Dates and endowments: No date indicated. No endowments.

Scribes: None identified

Owners/patrons: None identified

Restorers: Elizabeth Sobczynski and her team of conservators from the Levantine Foundation (21st cent.)

3 Material, Script, Organization of Quires and Folia, Dimensions and Layout, State of Preservation, Scribal and Readers' Insertions

Material: Paper. Thick/heavy stock Eastern paper with no watermarks. Front- and backmatter are modern textured paper with no watermarks. Folia ii (pp. iii–iv) and 292 (pp. 450–451) are clear plastic sheets bound into the volume as part of its modern conservation.

Script: Arabic. Black ink, with red headings and punctuation/dots. Small-to-medium scale hand, rendered in bold, short strokes with closely-packed words.

Organization of quires and folia:
Frontmatter: 4 leaves (*Copt.* i–iv; pp. i–viii)
Numbered folia: pp. ix, 1–445 (*Copt.* 1–3, [4], 5, 7, [8–9], 10, [7]1–289).
Backmatter: 4 leaves (pp. 446–453; *Copt.* 290–293).

The Arabic foliation is consistent, although recent and rendered in pencil. It begins with page 1 on the verso of the first folio. Thus, for the purposes of this catalogue, its unnumbered recto is referred to as p. ix (continuing the numbering system for the leaves of the frontmatter). Due to the fact that the original beginning of the manuscript does not survive, the Coptic cursive numbering for the first quire does not match up with the numbering of the subsequent quires. The first three folia are replacement quires and have the Coptic cursive foliation added (*Copt.* 1–3; = pp. ix, 1–5). The next five folia are original, but their foliation is unclear. The folio number for *Copt.* 4 (pp. 6–7) does not survive, but the number for *Copt.* 5 (pp. 8–9) does. The subsequent folio is labeled as *Copt.* 7 (pp. 10–11), although there are possible traces of a tens digit, in which case (with an eye toward the numbering of the subsequent quires) this may have originally been folio 67. No folio numbers survive for the next two folia (*Copt.* [8–9]; pp. 12–15). After this, there is a single (more recent) replacement page labeled *Copt.* 10 (pp. 16–17): it functions as the last folio in the first quire. The second quire, consisting of original folia, begins with *Copt.* 71 and proceeds consistently from then on. It is unclear how to explain this confusion in foliation numbers. If pp. 10–11 were originally labeled as *Copt.* 67, it would match up in sequence with the second quire that follows. But this does not explain what comes before. The labeling of the replacement leaf with *Copt.* 10 may have been the result of the partial survival of the folio number for *Copt.* 67, where only the number 7 survives: in which case, *Copt.* 10 would fall into sequence, but it

wouldn't explain the subsequent jump into the seventies or the absence of a *Copt.* folio 6. *Copt.* folia 130, and 150–151 are missing from the MS. The Arabic foliation simply continues uninterrupted, jumping over those gaps (from p. 125 to p. 126; and from p. 173 to p. 174). As a result, this catalogue uses the Arabic pagination as its primary reference.

The first quire is an eight-folio quaternion. The subsequent quires each consist of ten folia and are labeled on the recto of the first folio in each quire, beginning with the second quire on p. 18 (*Copt.* [7]1a). This quire system, however, proves to be secondary, as evidenced by the marking of the third quire (*thālith*) on p. 38 (*Copt.* 81a), where the original quire numbering (the ninth quire, *tāsiʿ*) has been erased but is still partially visible. These quire sequences continue in parallel up through the final quire, which is labeled as both the twenty-ninth (according to the original quire labelling) and the twenty-third quire (according to the more recent quire organization for the manuscript in its present form).

Dimensions: 22.5×15 cm
Area of writing: 18×12 cm
Lines per page: 16 lines/page

State of preservation:
New modern brown leather binding. The front and back covers are tooled with a double rectangular lined border and a tooled X bisecting it with four cruciform medallion stamps at the corners and five in the form of an X at the center of the tooled X. The new binding has two leather dongles and matching leather loops. On the insides of the front and back cover the earlier (original?) cover has been preserved/pasted. It was also of (heavily worn) dark brown leather with the same tooled and stamped pattern. As part of its modern conservation, the MS was bound with new front- and backmatter, including clear plastic pages in the second (pp. iii–iv; f. ii) and second-to-last (pp. 450–451; f. 292) positions.

Scribal and readers' insertions:
p. 248 (*Copt.* 191a): prayer for forgiveness on behalf of the (unnamed) scribe.
p. 248 (*Copt.* 191a): below the scribal prayer, another hand has written the following reflection on death and mortality:

عجبت لمن طلب الدنيا والموت طالبه
وعجبت لمن بنا القصور والقبر منازله

الموت كاسًا وكل الناس شاربه
والقبر بابًا وكل الناس داخله

Dayr al-Suryān MS 743
Old number: none
Ascetic Discourses (*Nusukiyyāt*)

1 Ascetic Works by Evagrius Ponticus (*Anbā Waghrī*)
pp. 1–2: Letter from Eulogius (*Lūkiyūs*) to Evagrius
The title section on p. 1 is mostly obscured by water damage, but its ending is reconstructable:

ص ١: ... رسالة من القديس لوكيوس الـ(..) الى القديس انبا وغري ...

pp. 2–3: The Response to the Letter of Eulogius (*Lūkiyūs*) by Evagrius

ص ٢: جوابه رسالة القديس انبا لوكيوس من القديس انبا وغري

pp. 3–26: *Edifying Discourse from Evagrius to Eulogius* (*Lūkiyūs*). Incomplete (chapters 12–35 are missing at the end).

ص ٣: كلام منفعة للقديس انبا وغري كتبه للقديس انبا لوكيوس الناسك

pp. 3–6: Chapter 1, On virtuous exile (*min ajl al-ghurba al-fāḍila*)
pp. 6–8: Chapter 2, On vainglory (*min ajl al-majd al-bāṭil*)
pp. 8–9: Chapter 3, On humility (*min ajl al-ittiḍāʿ*)
pp. 9–10: Chapter 4, On dwelling in peace (*min ajl al-sakan bi-salām*)
pp. 10–15: Chapter 5, On reconciliation and peace (*min ajl al-ṣulḥ wa-l-salām*)
pp. 15–16: Chapter 6, On patience (*min ajl al-ṣabr*)
pp. 16–18: Chapter 7, On vigilance and anxiety of heart (*min ajl al-sahar wa-qalaq al-qalb*)
pp. 18–20: Chapter 8, On meekness, anger, love, and the fear of God (*al-daʿa wa-l-ghaḍab wa-l-maḥabba wa-khawf Allāh*)
p. 20: Chapter 9, On living in poverty (*min ajl al-ʿaysha bi-maskana*)
pp. 20–26: Chapter 10, On rejection [of the world] and thoughts (*al-rafḍ wa-l-afkār*)
p. 26: Chapter 11, On repentance (*al-tawba*). Incomplete.
The text ends with the following line:

ص ٢٦: لا تفكر في مناقصك وتشهد عليهم...

2 Evidence for Dating and the Identity of Scribes, Owners, Patrons, and Restorers

Dates and endowments: No date indicated. No endowments apart from the purple stamps marking the volume as belonging to the Monastery of the Syrians (pp. 1, 12, 26).

Scribes: none identified.

Owners/patrons: none identified.

Restorers: none identified.

3 Material, Script, Organization of Quires and Folia, Dimensions and Layout, State of Preservation, Scribal and Readers' Insertions

Material: Paper. Light-to-medium weight Eastern stock, with no sign of chain or laid lines and no watermarks. Fine quality.

Script: Arabic. Black ink with red headings and section numbering. The script is small in scale (3–5 mm in height), written in a cramped, somewhat unpracticed style, with rather thick ink strokes.

Organization of quires and folia:
Frontmatter: 5 leaves (pp. i–x)
Numbered folia: pp. [1–2], 3–26
Backmatter: 5 leaves (27–36)

The pages are marked with Arabic numerals between parentheses centered in the upper margin. This style of pagination perhaps suggests a fairly recent date.

Dimensions: 16.3 × 11.5 cm
Area of writing: 12.5 × 7.5 cm; 20–21 lines/page

State of preservation:
Modern cloth cover with a soft leather/faux suede texture. The manuscript has been conserved recently, and as a result, the cover, binding, and front- and backmatter are in good shape. The pages show evidence of water stains, especially at the beginning of the MS (pp. [1–2] and 3–4), but also at the end (p. 26). As

a result sections of ink have bled and become illegible. There are also drips of candle wax on pp. 1, 4, and 5. The pages show signs of an earlier attempt at restoration, with the use of tape between p. 20 and p. 25 to reinforce the pages' connection to the binding. Page 23, however, is now detached from the spine.

Scribal and readers' insertions:
pp. 3–26: In the *Edifying Discourse*, the chapter numbers are sporadically noted, but when they are present they are consistent in numerical sequence. In addition, the work has sections numbered in red, which are different from the chapter numbering. The first 82 sections of the work survive.

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CHAPTER 17

Christian-Muslim-Jewish Relations in Patristic Literature: the Arabic *Questions and Answers of Basil and Gregory*

Barbara Roggema

Among the many achievements of Professor Griffith which scholars in the field of Christian Arabic literature recognize is the clarity with which he has explained how the contents of Christian apologetics vis-à-vis Islam are determined by the forms in which they are cast.[1] In his articles dealing with individual Christian Arabic works, Professor Griffith has paid ample attention to the various genres and formats of apologetic writings. A summarizing discussion of his findings and insights can be found in his monograph *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (2008). The chapter dealing with "genres and strategies of Christian discourse in the World of Islam" first of all addresses the question of genre. He describes the three main types of apologetic treatises: "questions and answers," epistolary exchanges, and systematic treatises. The section on "questions and answers" introduces several important examples of texts which are constructed wholly or partly in the format of dialogue and which address issues of Christian-Muslim difference: Theodore bar Koni's *Scholion* (in Syriac), the anonymous *al-Jāmiʿ wujūh al-īmān* (the "Summa theologiae arabica"), the anonymous *Masāʾil wa-ajwiba ʿaqliyya wa-ilāhiyya* ("Answers to the Shaykh"), and ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī's *Masāʾil wa-ajwiba*.[2] All of these Christian works from the early Islamic period organize their points of controversy by setting them in a dialogic format. They do this in different ways. The first example follows the well-known scheme of Master and Disciple. The Master expounds East-Syrian beliefs in response to the student's questions, which fluctuate between naïve and critical. The second work incorporates sections of questions and answers, in which the author mixes responses to various groups of opponents, chiefly dualists and Muslims. The third exam-

1 I would like to express my gratitude to the European Research Council for supporting this research within the framework of the projects DEBIDEM (King's College London) and JEWS-EAST (Ruhr University Bochum). I also thank Alexander Treiger for his detailed comments and corrections to this paper.

2 Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 81–85.

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ple, the Melkite apologetic tract called *Masāʾil wa-ajwiba ʿaqliyya wa-ilāhiyya* addresses the critical questions of a Muslim sheikh in Jerusalem, who had written a refutation of Christianity. Here the interlocutor's identity is single and unambiguous and his questions are clear-cut points of critique. ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī, on the other hand, also replies to Muslim critique of Christianity, but presents the questions as hypothetical in the format typical of kalām: "If someone were to argue …, we would reply …"

A comparison of these texts reminds us of the versatility of the question-and-answer format. The seemingly simple structure of brief statements of two interlocutors can be used for a range of different purposes. To understand the differences in the rhetorical strategies behind each text, the reader needs to be aware of variation in a number of aspects. First of all, one should determine the extent to which the conversation between the two partners progresses and ideas are exchanged. On the one extreme there are texts in which topics are dealt with in a single, definite answer. On the other extreme there are texts where ideas are worked out at greater length via multiple interrelated questions. Whereas in the former the reply comes across as authoritative *a priori*, the latter depict a proper dialogue, in which both conversation partners have questions to ask and answers to give. In many cases, we find mixed forms of these that fall somewhere in the spectrum from authoritative to argumentative. There are also differences in the way the texts present the person asking questions. Here again we can speak of a spectrum: on the one extreme there are the texts in which this person is merely inquiring, and, on the other extreme, a person who contests the answers given and proceeds to engage in an exchange of arguments. "Questions and answers," therefore, needs to be seen as an umbrella term for texts employing a dialogic format, with varying degrees of receptivity towards divergent views.

1 Questions and Answers of Basil and Gregory

In what follows I would like to draw attention to a text which, despite being the most frequently copied Christian Arabic question and answer text, has not received scholarly attention besides the few pages devoted to it by Graf.[3] It is

3 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:324–327. The other publications which mention the text provide some more information about the manuscripts only: Jacques Grand'Henry, "Répertoire des manuscrits de la version arabe de Grégoire de Nazianze. Première partie: Égypte," *Le Muséon* 97 (1984): 221–253, at 234, 237–238, 241–242, 244, 249; Jacques Grand'Henry, "Répertoire des manuscrits de la version arabe de Grégoire de Nazianze. Deuxième partie: Italie, Royaume-Uni," *Le*

the collection of questions and answers of Basil and Gregory. The title evokes the patristic era, since the main characters are the fourth-century church fathers Basil of Caesarea and either his friend Gregory of Nazianzus, or Basil's brother, Gregory of Nyssa.[4] The text belongs to the patristic genre of *erotapokriseis*, a term which applies to a more narrowly defined genre of literature that stands at the authoritative end of the spectrum described above and which is sometimes labelled with the term "Gesprächsbücher." The genre provided a convenient way to convey views, norms, and rules, by organizing them in this easily accessible format. In recent decades Byzantinists have drawn attention to the historical value of such texts, for the issues discussed in them appear to give a voice to people's wide range of intellectual, doctrinal, social, and quotidian concerns.[5] As Yannis Papadogiannakis put it, when he described the *erotapokriseis* of Pseudo-Justin:

> They help us to understand the kinds of perplexities that were being raised in the Christian communities of Late Antiquity as they negotiated a lively and contentious religious and social landscape, and they highlight the multifarious issues which Christian leaders had to be prepared to deal with in their pastoral, pedagogical, and apologetic work.[6]

Rather than delving deeply into one topic, authors and redactors of *erotapokriseis* believed in the succinct treatment of multiple questions and in providing answers that exclude the complexity found in more elaborate treatments of individual topics. At times one finds clusters of questions on related topics,

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Muséon 98 (1985): 197–229, at 202–205, 208–212, 216–219; Jacques Grand'Henry, "Répertoire des manuscrits de la version arabe de Grégoire de Nazianze. Troisième partie (Fin): France, Liban, Jérusalem, Allemagne Occidentale, Allemagne Orientale, Hollande, URSS," *Le Muséon* 99 (1986): 145–170, at 148, 157–160, 162, 166–167; and Joseph Nasrallah and Rachid Haddad, *Histoire du mouvement littéraire dans l'Église Melchite du Ve au XIXe siècle*, vol. 1 [Période Byzantine 451–634] (Damascus and Beirut: Presses de l'Ifpo-Cerpoc, 2016), 122–123.

4 Manuscript cataloguers frequently claim that the manuscripts refer to Gregory of Nazianzus. This is not the case; the manuscripts only mention "Gregory." Grand'Henry (see note 3 above) takes it for granted that the text points to Gregory of Nazianzus, while Graf, *GCAL*, 1:325, and Nasrallah and Haddad (see note 3 above) assume it is Gregory of Nyssa. Graf's identification is based on an all too hasty assumption that the Arabic text is based on surviving Syriac manuscripts containing questions of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa. See further below.

5 See the studies listed in note 7 below and the forthcoming monograph: Yannis Papadogiannakis, *Defining Identities and Beliefs in the Eastern Mediterranean 6–8c AD* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

6 Yannis Papadogiannakis, "Defining Orthodoxy in Pseudo-Justin's 'Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos'," in *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity*, ed. Eduard Iricinschi and Holger Zellentin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 115–127, at 126.

such as a series of scriptural questions, while in other cases the texts move quickly from issue to issue, seemingly without order. The ca. 150 questions of Basil and Gregory are no exception. Although this apparent randomness may strike the modern reader as a lack of organization, it seems fair to assume that the questions were arranged in this way for a reason, all the more so because the mixture of themes is a widespread feature of such collections. A possible explanation may be that the sequence of questions was made to resemble a real life setting, where questions emerge unannounced and in no particular order, and are "fired" at the clergy at random times. In other word, the collections of questions and answers may have functioned in the same way as nowadays one uses flashcards to prepare oneself for examinations.

Texts of this genre were frequently composed by Greek-speaking Christians in Late Antiquity and they continued to be written during later centuries.[7] Some famous examples are the voluminous collections of the *erotapokriseis* of Anastasius of Sinai and those attributed under the pseudonyms of Caesarius and Athanasius of Alexandria.[8] Arabic-speaking Christians in the Middle East also produced numerous collections, both in the form of newly composed texts and as translations and redactions of texts from the Greek and Syriac patristic heritage. These texts, too, can be mined for social, dogmatic and intellectual issues and challenges, yet not even one of the relevant Christian Arabic texts has been the subject of scholarly investigations.[9] This article is meant as a first step to show the potential of these texts as sources for the social and religious history of Arabic-speaking Christians.

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7 See the collective volumes Annelie Volgers and Claudio Zamagni, eds., *Erotapokriseis: Early Christian Question and Answer Literature in Context* (Louvain: Peeters, 2004) and Marie-Pierre Bussières, ed., *La littérature des questions et réponses dans l'Antiquité profane et chrétienne: de l'enseignement à l'exégèse* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), both with extensive further literature.

8 See John Haldon, "The Works of Anastasius of Sinai: A Key Source for the History of Seventh-Century East Mediterranean Society and Belief," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East 1. Problems in the Literary Source Material*, ed. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1992), 107–147; Yannis Papadogiannakis, "Christian Identity in Seventh-Century Byzantium: The Case of Anastasius of Sinai," in *Motions of Late Antiquity: Essays on Religion, Politics, and Society in Honour of Peter Brown*, ed. Jamie Kreiner and Helmut Reimitz (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 249–267; Yannis Papadogiannakis, "Didacticism, Exegesis, and Polemics in pseudo-Kaisarios's Erotapokriseis," in Bussières, *La littérature des questions et réponses*, 271–289; Caroline Macé, "Les *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem* d'un Pseudo-Athanase (CPG 2257): Un état de la question," in Bussières, *La littérature des questions et réponses*, 121–150.

9 I am preparing an overview of Christian Arabic patristic *erotapokriseis*. I am also preparing an edition of the Arabic versions of the *Quaestiones ad Antiochum ducem*. See my chapter in Barbara Roggema and Alexander Treiger, eds., *Patristic Texts in Arabic Translations* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, forthcoming).

The *Questions and Answers of Basil and Gregory* take a special place among the Christian Arabic *erotapokriseis*, as they are the most frequently copied and most widely circulated of such texts.[10] For this reason we may assume that this collection not only gives a good impression of the types of issues raised by Arab Christians to their spiritual authority figures, but that the answers have been frequently read and thus reinforced social norms. An interesting feature of the text is that Basil and Gregory take turns asking questions. In other words, the text does not follow the well-known student-master model, in which one of the interlocutors is the authority and the other the neophyte. Both speakers act as authorities. Their role does not exceed the actual posing of the questions: there is no further *mise-en-scène*.

Due to lack of research on this collection, there are some fundamental aspects which have not been addressed at all, or only superficially so. Graf drew attention to what he believed was the oldest manuscript: Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire 4226 (formerly Ar. 151).[11] Because it is from the ninth century (885 AD), Graf dated the whole of the corpus of the Arabic questions and answers to this early date. However, as it turns out, this brief text, on fols. 23r–27r, is a response of Basil to a letter by Gregory on asceticism, a central theme in the work of the historical Basil of Caesarea, but of negligible importance in the Arabic questions and answers of Basil and Gregory. The text is a faithful translation of an authentic letter, written by Basil to Gregory of Nazianzus around the year 385 AD.[12] With regard to the dating of the Arabic questions and answers, it is important to note that one question in the Arabic text is to be found almost verbatim in a ninth-century manuscript fragment, the Syriac manuscript London, BL Add. 12171. It consists of only four leaves of vellum and contains one question of Basil to Gregory.[13] The question is the same as the one which in the long Arabic collection in the edition of Girgis Bey Yaʿqūb appears as No. 117.[14] The London manuscript is dated to 833 AD. This may give us an indication of how early at least some of the questions in the collection were written, before having been translated into Arabic. The oldest surviving

10 For the quantity of manuscripts and their wide geographical dissemination, see the list at the end of this chapter.

11 On this manuscript and its *membra disiecta*, see André Binggeli, "Les trois David, copistes arabes de Palestine aux 9e–10e s.," in *Manuscripta Graeca et Orientalia: Mélanges monastiques et patristiques en l'honneur de Paul Géhin*, ed. André Binggeli, Anne Boud'hors, and Matthieu Cassin (Louvain: Peeters, 2016), 79–117, at 80–82.

12 *PG* 32, cols. 223–224 (Basilii Magni Epistolarum Classis I, Ep. II).

13 William Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Library Acquired since 1838* (London: British Museum, 1872), vol. 2, 766–767.

14 Girgis Bey Yaʿqūb, *Rasāʾil dīniyya qadīma* (Cairo, 1920), 144.

Arabic manuscript is Sinai ar. 330, which is estimated to go back to the tenth century. It contains about one third of the total collection of questions known from other manuscripts. The oldest manuscript containing the large collection is Sinai ar. 481, dated to 1091 AD.

Byzantine Greek texts which purport to consist of questions and answers of Basil and Gregory are quite numerous.[15] In his survey of Arabic manuscripts containing works of Gregory of Nazianzus, Jacques Grand'Henry assumes that there are connections between these Greek texts and the Arabic questions and answers.[16] A comparison, however, leads to the conclusion that there is no (edited) Greek text on which the Arabic is directly based.

Though not aware of London, BL Add. 12171, Graf found indications that the Arabic text is a translation from Syriac.[17] A desideratum therefore is the study of the Syriac text or texts that could have served as the basis for the Arabic. There are some manuscripts with *erotapokriseis* of Basil and Gregory in Syriac, but these are not as extensive and do not have the alternation between the two interlocutors. For example, the text on the six folios contained in Deir al-Surian Syr. 17 (fols. 1r–6v), mostly focusing on cosmology, has a style similar to the Arabic questions and answers, but is not textually related to them.[18] Since there are no indications that there was ever a collection as large as the Arabic text of ca. 150 questions, it seems perhaps more likely that the Arabic collection was put together from several different questions and collections of questions, which might have been Greek as well as Syriac and Arabic.

As for its community of origin, Graf's hypothesis of a Melkite milieu is attractive. The combination of several expressions of Syriac pride with the use of Greek terms for liturgical objects points to a composition made by Melkites. However, the text circulated in the Coptic and Syrian-Orthodox Churches as well. The wide geographical scope and time frame of the manuscripts listed in the appendix give an impression of the text's popularity.

15 See the manuscripts and editions listed in CPG 3064 to 3080.

16 For Grand'Henry's articles, see note 3 above. In these surveys, the author gives references to various Greek texts listed in CPG, even though these are not directly related to our text.

17 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:324–325.

18 Sebastian Brock and Lucas van Rompay, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts and Fragments in the Library of Deir al-Surian, Wadi al-Natrun (Egypt)* (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 90–92.

2 Christians and "Others" in the *Questions and Answers of Basil and Gregory*

> Gregory said: "If someone from the *ḥunafā'* or the Jews entrusts his child to the Christians to be raised by them, is it permissible to accept the child?"
>
> Basil answered: "It is like leaven in dough; that is how milk flows in the body. Everyone who grows up has an ever-growing love for the one who raises him and he becomes obedient to him. So if a Christian raises the child of a *ḥanīf* or a Jew, then he should not be reproached. But a Christian is not allowed to give his child to *ḥunafā'* or Jews, lest the child become like them."[19]

The text does not immediately reveal in which Near Eastern Christian community it originated for a simple reason: the text is low on doctrinal statements. This seems surprising for a text belonging to a genre that, according to modern readers, is characterized by its purpose to delineate orthodoxy.[20] Our questions and answers are somewhat different. They do occasionally refer to Christian "opponents" (*mukhālifūn*) with whom one should not mingle, but what makes Christians of other confessional communities into dissenters is not specified. The questions revolve around orthopraxy. References to "us, Christians," in opposition to other, heretical, Christians lack specifics of doctrinal distinction, and therefore—paradoxically—allowed the text to be transmitted from one Christian community to another, with the meaning of "opponents" simply being transposed. The text reinforced a sense of community not by setting doctrinal boundaries but by setting limits on people's actions and choices. Numerous questions arose in response to ideas and habits of those who were considered outsiders, as well as from people who are depicted as outsiders but were "from within." In the case of the latter, a wide range of divergent behaviors are brought up and strongly condemned by the two Church Fathers: homosexuality (Question 61), incest (Question 121), cross-dressing (Question 51), polygamy (Question 86), and suicide (Question 105).[21] These issues are dealt with in dif-

19 Question 104 in the edition: Ya'qūb, *Rasā'il*, 117 (with a minor correction from Sinai ar. 481, fol. 316r, where it is Question 105).

20 See, for example, Papadogiannakis, "Defining Orthodoxy."

21 The numbers here follow the numbering of Ya'qūb's edition. This edition is (presumably) based on one manuscript only, but the base manuscript is not indicated. Some manuscripts have a slightly divergent numbering, due to the omission and addition of questions.

ferent ways. On the one hand, there are cases where Basil or Gregory stipulate a concrete punishment for such acts and practices, often in the form of temporary expulsion from the church (in other words: canon-like answers), while in other cases they reject these in more general terms, claiming that the act leads to one's damnation. Other practices which feature because they can be perceived as divergent are, for example, the use of sacramental bread brought from holy places (as opposed to locally produced hosts), and ostentatious asceticism (Questions 110, 113, and 114).

Another thread in the text concerns contact with outsiders. Quite a few questions deal with challenges created by the ideas and practices of people who belonged to other religious communities, but who nevertheless have contact with the Christian community in question. I would like to focus on the question of how the two patristic authorities are used to define relations with Muslims and Jews (i.e., leaving aside a third category of "others," consisting of followers of superstitions, who appear in the context of questions about astrology, exorcism, and fatalism (Questions 49, 63, 79, 113, and 114)). Making reference to Muslims in a text which purports to be from the fourth century is oddly anachronistic. Yet, the Arabic-speaking Christians of the Middle East used a code-word for them. They called the Muslims *ḥunafā'*, the plural of *ḥanīf*, "pagan," to eliminate the anachronism of the early Church Fathers talking about Islam. In the passages of the Qur'ān where the term features, Qur'ānic commentators interpret it as references to pristine monotheism, while Christians in the Near East used it to refer to the perceived primitivism of Islam, i.e., "as a disguised pejorative expression."[22] In our text, the *ḥunafā'* and the Jews appear as the two main groups of outsiders. Some of the questions echo early Christian attitudes to paganism, and therefore one can occasionally wonder whether the response in question goes back to a ruling from the early Christian period, becoming relevant in a new context. Such could be the case with Question 102 that condemns Christians who bury their dead in a "pagan" way, dressing up the body in precious clothes and with jewelry, and accompanying the burial with wailing. Although Islamic norms commend sober funerals, in reality excessive wailing by hired women is a custom in many parts of the

22 Milka Levy-Rubin, "Praise or Defamation? On the Polemic Usage of the Term *ḥanīf* among Christians and Muslims in the Middle Ages," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 28 (2003): 202–224, at 206–207 and 222–223; see also Barbara Roggema, "Muslims as Crypto-Idolaters: A Theme in the Christian Portrayal of Islam in the Near East," in *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule: Church Life and Scholarship in 'Abbasid Iraq*, ed. David Thomas (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 1–18, at 13–14; François de Blois, "*Naṣrānī* (Ναζωραῖος) and *ḥanīf* (ἐθνικός): Studies on the Religious Vocabulary of Christianity and of Islam," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 65.1 (2002): 1–30.

Islamic world, and while burying precious objects may not have been as common, archeologists confirm that it did occur.[23] In other words, we are reminded of the fact that whereas our questions and answers are concerned with Christian norms, it does not mean that these are competing with Islamic *norms*: on the contrary, they compete with the *realities* of Islamic society, with which Christians came into contact. As with the question cited above, about rearing children across religious boundaries, the fear seems to be assimilation: "becoming like them." The desire to counteract Islamic influence, in particular, is also reflected in the rejection of Christian girls' use of kohl around their eyes (Question 95) and the reading of the books of the *ḥunafā'* (Question 71). There can be no doubt that these answers came in response to actual practice, not merely out of fear for them.[24]

There are other motivations to reinforce boundaries. In Question 103 there is the question of participating in the sacrificial feasts of the *ḥunafā'*. Gregory strongly condemns this, because these are occasions where Christians may fall into the trap of having to admit that the feasts of the *ḥunafā'* are superior to those of the Christians and hence be enticed to commit blasphemy. It is well-known that co-celebrating the religious feasts of others has been a common practice for the various religious communities in the Middle East for centuries.[25] Objections came from all sides, also because the feasts were an occasion to eat the impure sacrificial foods of other communities and to get to know potential marriage partners, leading to an increasing number of mixed marriages.

There are more questions that deal with social encounters with Muslims and Jews. For example, should one make the sign of the cross over food that one eats together with the Jews and Muslims (Question 87)? Gregory rejects the idea and appeals to the words of Christ: "Do not give what is holy to dogs and

23 For jewelry finds in Bedouin graves, see Joseph Zias, "The Cemeteries of Qumran and Celibacy: Confusion Laid to Rest?," in *Jesus and Archaeology*, ed. James Charlesworth (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006), 422–471, at 451–452.

24 Arabic-speaking Christians had a sustained interest in the Qur'ān, which can be inferred from the quotations about it in their writings and their refutations of it. See Clare E. Wilde, *Approaches to the Qur'ān in Early Christian Arabic Texts (750–1258 C.E.)* (Bethesda: Academica Press, 2014). As for Christian girls using kohl, it is one of the things that Edward Lane noticed about the "higher and middle classes" of the Copts in the nineteenth century: Edward Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Custom of the Modern Egyptians* (London: John Murray, 1860), 531.

25 See Alexandra Cuffel, *Shared Saints and Festivals among Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Kalamazoo: Arc Humanities Press, forthcoming).

do not throw your pearls before swine" (Matthew 7:6). He then connects this to the words of the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 1:18): "The word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing," and adds: "He called them dogs and swine and anything over which the sign of the cross has been made becomes a blessing and it is not permitted to give what is blessed to the *ḥunafā'*."

Question 96 deals with the related theme of hospitality and commensality. Basil states that one should always open one's door to fellow Christians, even if they are strangers. One should also be hospitable to the *ḥunafā'*, welcome them, and honor them. However, one should not eat or drink with either the *ḥunafā'* or the Jews. As for sorcerers and soothsayers, they are to be regarded as wild beasts, and it is only wild beasts that should eat with them. It is interesting to note, first of all, how this response reflects a gradation of "otherness." Jews and *ḥunafā'* can be guests and should be treated with respect, but they should not be invited to the table, in contradistinction to sorcerers and soothsayers, who should not be invited in the first place, because their activities make them the most foreign and least deserving of a Christian host's attention.

Gregory's question did not concern those other non-Christian outsiders, but in Basil's response their mention functions as a rhetorical device to emphasize hospitality vis-à-vis Jews and *ḥunafā'* as a partial acceptance, at least on a social level. Again we see that Basil and Gregory delve into issues that had been burning in the minds of ordinary believers and canon lawyers for centuries: the issue of commensality and the acceptability of non-Christian foods. A diachronic survey of the attitudes of Christians toward the foods and feasts of non-Christians, especially of Jews, shows that there were many interrelated issues at stake, such as the permissibility of purchasing and eating the food of others, especially sacrificial foods, the permissibility of sharing a table, and the distinctions to be made between the foods of various communities of non-Christians. Moreover, it was recognized that a shared meal provided a perfect occasion for an exchange of ideas and therefore also an occasion where one could be influenced by others. It could be a moment for proselytizing and for that very reason the early Church Fathers stimulated engagements over dinner. Yet, from the fourth century onwards that same intimacy of conversationalists was increasingly regarded as a threat and Christians were prohibited from sharing meals with Jews in particular, for the latter had rival interpretations of scripture and, moreover, rejected Christian food, an attitude that was perceived as an expression of a sense of superiority.[26] Here in the questions of Basil and Gregory the motivations behind the rejection of commensality are

26 David M. Freidenreich, "Sharing Meals with Non-Christians in Canon Law Commentaries, Circa 1160–1260: A Case Study in Legal Development," *Medieval Encounters* 14 (2008):

not elaborated on. Yet, comparing these questions with more elaborate legal deliberations helps us to understand the social dynamics which led to the formulation of these kinds of injunctions.

Interestingly, there appears to be a contradiction between Question 87 and Question 96. Question 87 takes it for granted that encounters of Christians with Jews and Muslims over dinner actually occur—hence the question of whether or not to make the sign of the cross—while Question 96 calls for an avoidance of such occasions. Obviously, Question 96 focuses on situations where the initiative is in the hands of the Christian. Question 87 is phrased more generally, but it may be assumed that it refers to situations where the Christian is not the host but the guest. Nonetheless, the two questions together show how, on the one hand, the text propagates an ideal of segregation, and on the other hand, provides answers to real life encounters with the religious other. That dining with the *ḥunafā'* cannot always be avoided also comes out in an additional question, found in only some of the manuscripts, as to whether one should accept the invitation of a *ḥanīfī* host under pressure.[27] The same issue featured in numerous Muslim legal sources dealing with *dhimmī*s. According to various versions of the "Pact of 'Umar," Christians are required to provide hospitality and food to Muslims for three days.[28]

41–77; David M. Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011).

27 E.g., Sinai ar. 485 (13th cent.), fols. 70v–149r, at fol. 108r. For an interesting parallel in Jacob of Edessa, see Michael Philip Penn, *Envisioning Islam: Syriac Christians and the Early Muslim World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 145–146: "[Jacob's] decisions frequently reflected, often reacted against, and occasionally condoned substantial interconfessional mingling. In some cases, Jacob's rulings reluctantly allowed such interactions. For example, he explained to the priest Addai that ideally an abbot should not share a meal with an emir. But Jacob conceded that 'due to necessity' the abbot might, nevertheless, have to do so. Other Syriac works ranging from epistles to disputation texts to prayers to letter templates spoke of the meeting of Christian and emirs. What differentiated Jacob's letter was the focus on food. Addai's question was, 'If an emir ordered an abbot to dine with him, should he eat or not?' The issue at hand did not seem to be whether a meeting between abbot and emir could take place. Like other Syriac texts, Jacob's letter took this for granted. Instead, the central concern was the eating itself. Addai's one-sentence question and Jacob's two-sentence answer never specified whether the underlying concern was the intimacy of a shared meal, a purity question regarding the served food, the implied hierarchy between host and guest, or some other issue. But their discussion did suggest that emirs had clergy over for dinner, an invitation that would be difficult for Christians to refuse."

28 See the comparison of the various Pacts of 'Umar in Daniel Earl Miller, "From Catalogue to Codes to Canon: The Rise of the Petition to 'Umar among Legal Traditions Governing

Another issue that shows tension between ideal and reality in Basil and Gregory's questions is slavery. From early Christian times, the question of Christian slave trade and ownership has been ambiguous. Principled views about human equality before God stood in tension with the social reality of unfree people being imported and integrated into Christian society. If I am reading the relevant questions correctly, this tension is also tangible here in Basil and Gregory's questions. Question 27 is the question of whether Christians could buy and sell slaves. The answer is that buying a human being and then selling him is the equivalent of selling the Image of God, "just as Judas Iscariot did." Whoever does so should immediately repair the misstep by buying the slave back and manumitting him. The reprehensibility of the act becomes clear from the punishment for not doing so. Until one buys back the slave and sets him free, the community of Christians cannot share meals with the wrongdoer. If the slave owner persists in his error, then no funeral mass will be held for him when he dies.

The next question, Question 28, concerns the baptism of slaves.[29] The issue at stake is whether a priest is allowed to baptize a slave without the permission of his master, if the master is Christian. Basil says:

> A priest cannot baptize him [i.e., a slave] without the permission of his [Christian] master, for he is to give him a written guarantee that he will not sell him but rather emancipate him after his [i.e., the master's] death. That is so as to avoid that he is sold to the *ḥunafā'* after having been baptized and is forced to deny baptism.

One notices how the strong rejection of slave trading is immediately followed by a question in which Christian slave owning is taken for granted. Despite its brevity, the answer invokes the complex reality of the relationships between slave owners and slaves in the medieval Middle East. In principle, one may assume that the slave owner would applaud the fact that his slave found what he regards as the true faith, and not remain an unbeliever.[30] Although we know little about individual cases in the various Arab Christian communities, for

Non-Muslims in Medieval Islamicate Societies" (PhD diss., University of Missouri, 2000), 367–394.

29 There are further questions with regard to slavery (e.g., Question 77 about the rape of a slave woman), but there is no reference in these to the religious adherence of the slave.

30 The slave would not have been Muslim, because *dhimmī*s were not supposed to be masters of Muslims. A slave converting to Christianity could be a pagan (pagan slaves were imported from sub-Saharan Africa and the Russian steppes) or a Jew.

Jews and Muslims it was desirable to try to convert one's slave to one's faith (in fact in Judaism it was a religious obligation),[31] and in Byzantium it was the norm as well.[32] We may perhaps assume that therefore Christians in the Middle East had the same social practice. Although we cannot be sure about this, at least here, in an example where the initiative to formal conversion lies with the slave himself, it is hard at first sight to understand what objections the slave owner might have. Perhaps we should take into account a potential conflict between pious motivations and the desire for financial gain. The response indirectly suggests that a slave owner would rather retain the option of selling his slave if so desired.[33] In order to understand the requirement of a written guarantee, we have to hypothesize what would happen without it.

Since slave trading as such is labelled as a sinful activity, the selling of a slave who is baptized was probably even more of a taboo than the selling of a non-Christian slave. This means, first of all, that the value of the slave decreases with conversion. For the slave himself, there would be a benefit though: because of his decreased value, the chances of him being set free in due time increase. It could therefore be strategic for slaves to convert to the religion of their master. A priest who baptizes this slave may, however, find himself in difficulty. First of all, he could be criticized by the slave owner or his heirs for having done so, and more importantly, he would be responsible for a conversion that many would regard as insincere. Last but not least, once the slave has become Christian, paradoxically the chance of his being eventually sold to Muslims increases, since he would be harder to sell within the Christian community.[34] In other

31 Because of the wealth of documents from the Cairo Genizah, much more is known about Jewish attitudes to and practices of slavery in the medieval Middle East. Although the situation among Christians was not necessarily the same, the Genizah documents nevertheless give a good impression of the broader issues at stake. See, for example, Craig Perry, "Conversion as an Aspect of Master-Slave relations in the Medieval Egyptian Jewish Community," in *Contesting Interreligious Conversion in the Medieval World*, ed. Yaniv Fox and Yosi Yisraeli (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 135–159.

32 Youval Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery and the Mediterranean World*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), 43.

33 Such cases are known from the Middle Eastern Jewish community. Jacob Mann found records in the Genizah of Jewish masters opposing the circumcision of their slaves, because it would make them less marketable, and mentions a responsum of Rabbi Hai Gaon pondering on slave owner who prevents his slave from becoming a Jew, despite the slave's desire—see Jacob Mann, "The Responsa of the Babylonian Geonim as a Source of Jewish History. II: The Political Status of the Jews," *Jewish Quarterly Review* n.s. 10 (1919): 121–151, here 145–146.

34 Because slave trading was officially considered unethical in the Church, selling and buying a Christian slave as opposed to a non-Christian one would increase the social discomfort.

words, the priest would be responsible for an increase in chance that the slave will eventually abandon his Christian faith under the influence of Muslims whom he encounters in his new social setting. These problems are all eliminated by the written guarantee of emancipation after the master's death.

This final question leads me to some brief concluding comments. The *Questions and Answers of Basil and Gregory* include many straightforward injunctions to Christian readers that have the aim of keeping the community intact, with all of its customs, rituals, and beliefs, in defiance of influence from outsiders. At the same time, the questions and answers reveal that contact with others, first of all Muslims, but also Jews, was real and that a somewhat pragmatic attitude was in the better interest of the community. Because of the lasting popularity of the text, it can be used as a source for Arab Christian perspectives on on-going social changes and challenges. Further research into the manuscript tradition might reveal how the various ecclesiastical communities transformed the text over the centuries. This, in turn, will give us a better view on what they valued in this text.

Appendix: an Inventory of Manuscripts

Here follows a list of manuscripts found in the major catalogues and digitized collections of Christian Arabic manuscripts, including *karshūnī* manuscripts. Some contain only selected questions, as can be seen from the small number of folios. Some of the manuscripts listed by Graf, Grand'Henry, and Nasrallah and Haddad are not listed, because they contain different texts, for example, a shorter text which includes John Chrysostom as one of the interlocutors. References to the major catalogues as well as online links to digitized manuscripts, where available, including via Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML) in Collegeville, Minnesota, are provided in brackets.

1. Sinai ar. 330 (10th cent.) fols. 177r–226v [www.loc.gov/item/00279385354-ms];
2. Sinai ar. 481 (1091), fols. 284v–326r [www.loc.gov/item/00279391275-ms];
3. Sinai ar. 485 (13th cent.), fols. 70v–149r [www.loc.gov/item/00279391238-ms];
4. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Syr. 198 (ca. 13th cent.), fols. 92v–93r [E. Sachau, *Verzeichniss der syrischen Handschriften* (Berlin, 1899), vol. 2, 642];
5. Jerusalem, Saint Mark's Syrian Orthodox Monastery 272 (ca. 14th cent.), fols. 1r–37r [HMML SMMJ 00272];
6. Vatican, Borg. Ar. 135 (1408), fols. 100r–104v, 106r–143r [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Borg.ar.135];

7. Vatican, Vat. Sbath 125 (1440), fols. 239r–248v [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Sbath.125];
8. Jerusalem, Saint Mark's Syrian Orthodox Monastery 248(B) / Macomber 2.13B (1474), fols. 89r–96r [W. Macomber, *Final Inventory of the Microfilmed Manuscripts of the St. Mark's Convent Jerusalem* (Provo, 1995), 95];
9. Cambridge Add. 2881 (1484), fols. 268r–299r [W. Wright, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1901), vol. 2, 719–720];
10. Daroun-Harissa, Syrian Catholic Monastery of Charfet 771 (1490), fols. 92v–101r [B. Sony, *Le Catalogue des manuscrits du Patriarchat au Couvent de Charfet-Liban* (Beirut, 1993), 276];
11. Birmingham, Mingana Syr. 225 (15th cent.), fols. 81r–87v [A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection*, vol. 1, col. 468];
12. Vatican, Vat. syr. 408 (1549), fols. 321v–377v [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.408];
13. Cambridge, University Library Dd. 10.10 (1561), fols. 1v–12v [Wright, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, 996];
14. Vatican, Vat. ar. 32 (1584), fols. 41r–45r [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ar.32];
15. Vatican, Vat. syr. 58 (1586), fols. 159r–161r [J.S. Assemani and S.E. Assemani, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae codicum manuscriptorum catalogus* (Paris, 1758), vol. 2, 352];
16. Jerusalem, Saint Mark's Syrian Orthodox Monastery 170 (1596), fols. 218v–235r [HMML SMMJ 00170];
17. Vatican, Borg. Syr. 24 (16th cent.), fols. 48r–54v [A. Scher, "Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques du Musée Borgia aujourd'hui à la Bibliothèque Vaticane," *Journal Asiatique* 10/13 (1919): 249–287, at 255];
18. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France Syr. 194 (16th cent.), fols. 87v–105r [H. Zotenberg, *Manuscrits orientaux: Catalogues des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens* (*mandaïtes*) *de la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris, 1874), 137];
19. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France Syr. 198 (16th cent.) fols. 112r–130v [http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10528609q/f3.image.r=Syriaque];
20. Daroun-Harissa, Syrian Catholic Monastery of Charfet Syr. 11/14 (16th cent.) [I. Armalet, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de Charfet* (Jounieh, 1937), 216–217];
21. Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs 109 (16th cent.), fols. 264r–288v [HMML CFMM 00109];
22. Birmingham, Mingana Syr. 367 (16th cent.), fols. 46v–72r [Mingana, *Catalogue*, vol. 1, col. 667];

23. Mardin, Chaldean Cathedral s.n. (formerly Monastery of Rabban Hormizd, Macomber 70.25) (16th–17th cent.), fols. 49r–64v [HMML CCM 00450]24.;
25. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 213 (1602), fols. 19v–72v [G. Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes, première partie: manuscrits chrétiens*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1972), 183];
26. Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate 285 (3) (Theol. 145) (1624), fols. 106v–137r [M. Simaika Pasha, *Catalogue of the Coptic and Arabic Manuscripts in the Coptic Museum, the Patriarchate, the Principal Churches of Cairo and Alexandria and the Monasteries of Egypt* (Cairo, 1939–1942), vol. 2, 119–120];
27. Vatican, Vat. syr. 159 (1628–1632), fols. 283v–288v [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.sir.159];
28. Daroun-Harissa, Syrian Catholic Monastery of Charfet 784 (1641), fols. 178–185 [Sony, *Catalogue*, 290];
29. Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate 344 (Theol. 120) (1689), fols. 1r–49v [Simaika, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, 124];
30. Mardin, Chaldean Cathedral 16 (formerly 81.7) (17th cent.), fols. 42v–45v [HMML CCM 00016];
31. Mardin, Dayr al-Za'farān 215 (formerly 6 3/6) (ca. 17th cent.), pp. 124–172 [HMML ZFRN 00215];
32. Mosul, Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of Mosul 264 (17th/18th cent.), fols. 17r–46r [HMML ASOM 00264];
33. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Syr. 244 (1705), fols. 120v–137r [Sachau, *Verzeichniss*, vol. 2, 742–743];
34. Aleppo, Salem Ar. 226 (formerly Sbath 1028) (1715), fols. 21r–101r [F. del Río Sanchez, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la fondation Georges et Mathilde Salem* (*Alep, Syrie*) (Wiesbaden, 2008), 126];
35. Oxford, Bodleian Library Arab. f. 20 (1719), fols. 2r–135v [https://www.fihrist.org.uk/catalog/manuscript_10478];
36. Birmingham, Mingana Syr. 562 (1723), fols. 450v–472v [Mingana, *Catalogue*, vol. 1, col. 1051];
37. Hiersemann Katal. 581, No. 1372 (1723/4), probably lost [K.W. Hiersemann, *Katalog 581, Semitica—Hamitica* (Leipzig, 1928), 78];
38. Mardin, Dayr al-Za'farān 56 (formerly 8/14) (1726/7), fols. 52r–68r [HMML ZFRN 00056];
39. New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Ar. 349 (1755), fols. 171r–181r;
40. Daroun-Harissa, Syrian Catholic Monastery of Charfet 272 (1760), fols. 284–286 [Sony, *Catalogue*, 99];
41. Daroun-Harissa, Bibliothèque des missionaires de Saint Paul 36 (1772), pp. 84–164 [J. Nasrallah, *Catalogue des manuscrits du Liban*, vol. 1 (Harissa, 1958), 650];

42. Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs 122 (17th/18th cent.), pp. 303–341 [HMML CFMM 00122];
43. Cairo, Coptic Patriarchate 443 (Theol. 244 / Graf 454) (18th cent.), fols. 2r–53v [Simaika, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, 197–198];
44. Birmingham, Mingana Arab. Christ. 59 [86b] (18th cent.) fols. 63v–65v [Mingana, *Catalogue*, vol. 2, 84];
45. Birmingham, Mingana Syr. 445 (18th cent.), fols. 2v–31v [Mingana, *Catalogue*, vol. 1, col. 790];
46. Birmingham, Mingana Syr. 446 (18th cent.) fol. 125r–v [Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection*, vol. 1, col. 795];
47. Mardin, Church of the Forty Martyrs 296 (18th cent.?), pp. 1–20 [HMML CFMM 00296];
48. Mosul, Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of Mosul 124 (18th cent.), fol. 7r [HMML ASOM 00124];
49. Mardin, Dayr al-Zaʿfarān 73 (formerly 13 2/13) (18th cent.), pp. 1–33 [HMML ZFRN 00073];
50. Daroun-Harissa, Syrian Catholic Monastery of Charfet 827 (18th cent.), fols. 1v–8v [Sony, *Catalogue*, 323];
51. Vatican, Vat. ar. 145, fols. 19r–20v (quotation of Question 26 only) [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.Ar.145];
52. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Syr. 256 (1802), fols. 39r–129v [Sachau, *Verzeichniss*, vol. 2, 781–783];
53. Daroun-Harissa, Syrian Catholic Monastery of Charfet 834 (1820), fols. 165r–235v [Sony, *Catalogue*, 327];
54. Zaḥlé, Bibliothèque ʿĪsā Iskandar Maʿlūf 13 (1832), pp. 168–178 [Nasrallah, *Catalogue des manuscrits du Liban*, vol. 4, 17];
55. Dayr al-Mukhalliṣ OBS0323 (1843) [http://www.obslb.com/img/handlist_manuscrits_ordre_basilien_salvatorien.pdf]
56. Cairo, Coptic Museum 78 (3) (Canon. 138) (1841), fols. 251r–277r [Simaika, *Catalogue*, vol. 1, 40];
57. Daroun-Harissa, Syrian Catholic Monastery of Charfet 793 (1861), fols. 129v–135v [Sony, *Catalogue*, 303];
58. Cairo, Catholic Coptic Seminary 1 (18th/19th cent.) [Awad Wadi, *Catalogue des manuscrits du séminaire copte catholique, Le Caire—Maadi* (Cairo, 2006), 6];
59. Dayr al-Balamand 131 (586) (18th/19th cent.) [R. Haddad, *Manuscrits du Couvent de Belmont* (*Balamand*) (Beirut, 1970), 88];
60. Mardin, Dayr al-Zaʿfarān 219 (formerly 7 3/7) (18th/19th cent.), fols. 112r–127v [HMML ZFRN 00219];
61. Beirut, Bibliothèque orientale 563 (19th cent.), pp. 194–232;

62. Daroun-Harissa, Syrian Catholic Monastery of Charfet 847 (19th cent.), fols. 234–317 [Sony, *Catalogue*, 335];
63. Dayr al-Shuwayr 353 (formerly 250) (unknown date, probably lost) [Nasrallah, *Catalogue des manuscrits du Liban*, vol. 3, 241];
64. Cairo, Franciscan Center of Christian Oriental Studies 255 (19th cent.), fols. 131r–208v [W.F. Macomber, *Catalogue of the Christian Arabic Manuscripts of the Franciscan Center of Christian Oriental Studies, Muski, Cairo* (Jerusalem, 1984), 54];
65. Cairo, Franciscan Center of Christian Oriental Studies 291 (19th cent.), pp. 284–316 [Macomber, *Catalogue of the Christian Arabic Manuscripts of the Franciscan Center of Christian Oriental Studies*, 61];
66. Dayr al-Shuwayr 330 (formerly 130) (19th cent.) [Nasrallah, *Catalogue des manuscrits du Liban*, vol. 3, 222];
67. Birmingham, Mingana Syr. 155 (19th cent.), fols. 69v–88r [Mingana, *Catalogue*, vol. 1, col. 357].

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CHAPTER 18

A Fragment of a Christian-Muslim Disputation "in the Style of Abū Rā'iṭa and ʿĪsā ibn Zurʿa" (Gotha ar. 2882, fols. 16r–24v): a Reassessment

Harald Suermann

The Gotha Research Library (Forschungsbibliothek Gotha) is one of the most prominent German libraries. Its manuscript holdings, among them a collection of 3496 oriental manuscripts, are among the largest in Germany. The oriental collection covers a wide variety of subjects, such as jurisprudence, medicine, theology, and others. Not all of these manuscripts were written by Muslims; some have Christian authors.

The roots of the Gotha oriental collection go back to the seventeenth century. Most of the codices were assembled in the nineteenth century, while a few were acquired in the twentieth century.[1] Most of the Gotha collection was purchased by Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811) during his stay in Constantinople, Aleppo, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Cairo at the behest of Augustus, Duke of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (r. 1804–1822).

The codex Gotha ar. 2882 contains several texts of Christian origin. According to Wilhelm Pertsch's catalogue, it consists of several fragments and twelve longer texts on 139 pages with an average of 15 lines per page.[2] Nothing is known about the origin of the codex, except that it was acquired by Seetzen in Damascus. Evidently, it comprises several manuscripts fragments written in different hands and at different times. According to Georg Graf, most of these fragments date to the fourteenth century. Graf provides additional information about most of the texts, as well as identifies several texts not indicated by Pertsch (Nos. 3, 11b, 15, and 16 in the list below). Here is the content of the codex (with Graf's dating of the items, where available).

1. Several fragments;[3]

1 Webpage "Manuscripts: Oriental" (https://www.uni-erfurt.de/index.php?id=16914&L=1; Accessed 23 June 2015).

2 Wilhelm Pertsch, *Die orientalischen Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha auf Befehl Sr. Hoheit des Herzogs Ernst II. von Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha verzeichnet*, vol. 3.4 (Gotha: Friedr. Andr. Perthes, 1883), 555–556.

3 Graf, GCAL, 1:234 (a fragment on the robber Lazarus, who accompanied the Holy Family to

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2. [fols. 30r–37v] The story of Martinianus;[4]
3. [fols. 37Ar–38v] A fragment of the Acts of Thomas (14th century);[5]
4. [fols. 38v–43v] Two chapters (on salvation from sin and on confession) from Cyril ibn Laqlaq's *Kitāb al-iʿtirāf*, also known as *Kitāb al-muʿallim wa-l-tilmīdh*;[6]
5. [beginning fol. 43v] The life of an unknown monk;
6. [fol. 45r/v–62v] Seven questions about the Christian faith (12th/13th century);[7]
7. [fols. 63r–79r] The life of John of Damascus (16th century);[8]
8. [fols. 79r–83v] The eighth miracle of St. Nicholas (year 1391);[9]
9. [fols. 84r–87v] The story of Abraham and the sacrifice of Isaac (14th century);[10]
10. [fols. 88r–92r] The story of the icon of the Virgin Mary in Ṣaydanāyā (14th century);[11]
11. [beginning fol. 93v] Homilies, including (a) [94r–97r] Ephrem's homily on the cross and (b) [97r–104r] a homily on Cosmas and Damian (both 14th century);[12]
12. [fols. 106r–114r] Disputation of a certain ʿAbd al-Wāhid ibn Ibrāhīm al-Baṣrī with a Chinese monk (16th century);[13]
13. [fols. 114v–124r] Story of the seven sleepers of Ephesus (14th century);[14]
14. [beginning fol. 124v] A polemical treatise against the Jews;

Egypt and was later crucified on Christ's right side, fol. 29r–v; year 1479); 294 (Wisdom of Sibyl, fols. 1r–10v; 13th century); 510 (The martyrs of Sebaste, fols. 11r–15v; 18th cent.); 4:39 (a disputation "in the style of Abū Rāʾiṭa and ʿĪsā ibn Zurʿa," discussed below, fols. 16r–24v; end of the 17th cent.).

4 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:510.

5 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:264.

6 Graf, *GCAL*, 2:366 (who, however, mentions only one chapter: ch. 13). On this work, see also Mark N. Swanson, "Three Sinai Manuscripts of Books 'of the Master and the Disciple' and Their *membra disiecta* in Birmingham," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 65 (1999): 347–361, here 349–352.

7 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:477; on this work, see also Arnold van Lantschoot, *Les "Questions de Théodore": Texte sahidique, recensions arabe et éthiopienne* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1957), here 70–71.

8 Graf, *GCAL*, 2:70; on this work, see also Alexander Treiger, "Michael al-Simʿānī," in *CMR*, 5:655–664.

9 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:511.

10 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:203.

11 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:256.

12 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:426 and 508.

13 Graf, *GCAL*, 2:475.

14 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:513.

15. [fols. 126r–132v] Story of the deacon Elias (14th century);[15]
16. [fols. 135r–139v] A fragment of the Acts of Peter (14th century).[16]

In the present contribution, I shall focus on one of the initial fragments: the fragment located on fols. 16r–24v. The beginning and the end of this text are missing. The author and the title are unknown. According to Graf, the fragment dates to the seventeenth century.[17] The original text could, however, have been written much earlier. Graf states that the fragment contains a Christian-Muslim disputation whose author was a Jacobite, because it resembles the writings of the Jacobite theologians Abū Rā'iṭa (d. ca. 835) and ʿĪsā ibn Zurʿa (943–1008). The disputation discusses the question of the two natures of Christ. The author uses various types of argumentation in support of his Christology. In what follows I shall, first, present the text and then offer several critical remarks.

The fragment under discussion starts mid-sentence. An answer or a clarification by an anonymous interlocutor, evidently a Muslim, follows. This Muslim opponent claims that Christ's humanity is an undivided and immortal essence. The author polemicizes with him. Though endorsing the Muslim interlocutor's affirmation of Christ's immortality, he makes the point that, in Christian view, it is Christ's *divinity* that is immortal; he therefore takes the Muslim disputant to task for assigning immortality to Christ's humanity. In the author's view, Christ's humanity is mortal and capable of suffering.

In support of his position, the author cites Q 4:157—the famous Qur'ānic verse that argues that it only appeared that Christ was crucified and put to death, while in reality God took him up alive to heaven. According to the author, this Qur'ānic statement proves that the immortal essence of Christ is divine. The author takes the Muslim opponent to task for assuming that Christ *as a human being* did not suffer death; he argues that this is a contradiction in terms, comparing it with such absurd claims as "an animal is not an animal" or "a rational being is not rational." The author explains that Christians believe that Christ consists of *two* substances (*jawharayn*) and essences (*dhātayn*). In the Christian view, it was the *human* substance that endured the passion and died on the cross, while the divine substance did not. Finally, the author finds confirmation for his position in the Qur'ān's *twofold* characterization of Christ: the Qur'ān describes Christ as, on the one hand, a man born of Mary, eating and drinking, suffering and fasting, growing in wisdom and in stature and, on the other hand, as God's Spirit and Word born without carnal seed, announced by an angel to

15 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:550.
16 Graf, *GCAL*, 1:262.
17 Graf, *GCAL*, 4:39.

Mary, and working miracles. The author insists that human beings are unable to perform such miracles as resurrecting the dead or multiplying the loaves. The author repeats that the Qurʾān testifies that Christ was not crucified. He then asks his opponent: given that the Qurʾān presents these mutually contradictory attributes of Christ, do all these attributes tell the truth about Christ or not? If the Muslim opponent were to respond that the Qurʾān does not tell the truth, he would have left the community of Islam. If, on the other hand, he were to agree that Christ's mutually contradictory attributes are all true, he would be hard-pressed to explain how this is possible. The author then proceeds to show his Muslim opponent in what sense these mutually contradictory attributes could all be true.

First, he refers to Aristotle's statement that one and the same thing cannot be simultaneously true and false. He repeats that Christians regard Christ as one but as consisting of two essences (*dhātayn*) and two natures (*ṭabīʿatayn*), human and divine. This is precisely the reason why Christ can be legitimately characterized in two seemingly contradictory ways, both, however, reporting the truth. Because the Muslims see in Christ only one essence and one nature, i.e., humanity, the author asks how they can describe Christ in these two contradictory ways. Again the reference to the Qurʾānic description of Christ as, on the one hand, a human being and, on the other hand, as Word and Spirit of God follows. The author claims that he has proven the veracity of the Christian doctrine of Christ's two essences and two natures, which, according to him, is attested by the Qurʾān.

Next, the author justifies his way of speaking about Christ in terms of *two* essences and *two* natures. He explains that he does so disregarding (for the sake of the argument) the union between the divine and the human in Christ. He argues that, by doing so, he is able to present the Christian understanding of Jesus Christ to the Muslims in a clearer fashion. He emphasizes, however, that according to the Jacobite teaching, which he upholds, *after* the union between the divine and the human, Jesus Christ has only *one* nature and is only *one* person. The author's argument deserves to be quoted in full.

(18أ) ... واذا*[18] انّي ببعض مَنْ تقع رسالتُنا هذه اليه من النصارى وخصوصًا*[19] اليعاقبة ويفهمها ينكر عليّ: لِمَ فرّقتَ*[20] السيّد المسيح وقلتَ فيه انّه طبيعتين وذاتين وان عيسى غير

18 MS: وكا. (Here and below, asterisks mark emendations introduced into the text.)

19 MS: وخصوصه.

20 MS: فرقه.

كلمة الله وكلمة الله غير عيسى؟ ويلوم ويقول:*[21] ليس هذا اعتقادك واعتقاد اليعاقبة فلِمَ استجريتَ ان تصف السيّد المسيح بهذه الصفات؟

الجواب في ذلك: انّما وصفنا السيّد المسيح بهذه الصفات لا من حيث ننظر*[22] اليه وقد اوقعنا به لفظة*[23] الاتّحاد بل من حيث نرفع عنه لفظة الاتحاد، فانّ النصارى كلّهم مجمعين على انّ الذات الالهية والذات | (18ب) البشرية اتّحدا فصارا مسيحًا واحدًا فنحن انّما وصفنا المسيح سبحانه بهذه الصفات من حيث ننظر*[24] اليه ونرفع عنه لفظة الاتّحاد وامّا*[25] من بعد الاتّحاد الذي يسبّب جميع الكثرة الى الوحدة فنقول فيه طبيعة واحدة واقنوم واحد لانّ لا يجوز ان نصفه من بعد الاتّحاد بالصفة التي*[26] كنّا نصفه بها قبل الاتّحاد والّا كان حال الاتّحاد وحال الافتراق حال واحدة وكان الافتراق هو الاتّحاد والاتّحاد هو الافتراق. ولمّا كانت رسالتُنا هذه مخصوصة الى مَنْ يخالفنا في ذات السيّد المسيح وجوهريّته احتجنا ان نصفه بانّه ذاتين وطبيعتين كيما يفهم*[27] ما هو السيّد المسيح، وهذا كافٍ في الاعتذار.

(18r) ... Suppose I encounter any of those Christians and particularly the Jacobites whom this treatise of ours will reach, and they will understand it. Such a person will object to me [as follows]: Why did you split the Lord Christ [in two] and why did you say concerning him that he is two natures and two essences and that Jesus is not the Word of God and the Word of God is not Jesus? He will take issue [with me] and will say: This is not your belief and not the belief of the Jacobites. Why, then, did you dare to characterize the Lord Christ in this manner?

[I shall offer the following] response to this. We characterized the Lord Christ in this manner not insofar as we consider him with the term "union" [of the divine and the human] already applied to him, but insofar as we deny the term "union" regarding him. In fact, all the Christians are in agreement that the divine essence and | **(18v)** the human essence have become united and have become One Christ. We characterized the

21 MS: وتلوم وتقول.
22 MS: ينظر.
23 MS: لفضه.
24 MS: ينظر.
25 MS: وانا.
26 MS: الذي.
27 MS: تفهم.

> Lord Christ (glory be to him!) in this manner insofar as we consider him in respect to denying the term "union" regarding him. After the union, on the other hand, when all plurality has been replaced by unity, we confess concerning Christ that he is one nature and one person (*ṭabīʿa wāḥida wa-uqnūm wāḥid*). This is because it is not possible to characterize him after the union in the same manner as we used to characterize him before the union. Otherwise, the states of union and separation would be the same, and union would be equivalent to separation and separation to union. However, because this treatise of ours is addressed to those who object to us regarding the very essence and substantiality of Christ [i.e., to the Muslims], we had to characterize Christ as two essences and two natures, so that [our opponents] may understand who Christ is. This is a sufficient justification [in response to the above question].[28]

At this point, the author proceeds to demonstrate his position through testimonies about the Word attributed to some ancient philosophers.

1. He begins with Porphyry (in the manuscript: قرفوريوس), who is cited as saying that the Son, who is the Light, descended, removed darkness from the people, and then returned.[29]
2. The author then cites the philosopher Hermes (هرمس), according to whom the Word was born and was perfect, descended into a woman, and discommoded the earth.[30]
3. Then he cites Amelios (so in the parallel Syriac version of the prophecies of ancient philosophers, discovered by Sebastian Brock; in the manuscript: ذيمسطليوس), who argues that the Word was with God and was God, and through him everything was created. In order to descend from heaven he was clothed with a clothing of flesh. He was regarded as a man and manifested the greatness of the Substance. And again, he was God as he had been prior to his descent.[31]
4. The next one is Photius (فوطيس), who is cited as saying that God is threefold in his attributes, unlimited, and non-sensory. The virgin became preg-

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28 I thank Alexander Treiger for his help in editing my contribution and for his translation of the above passage. This passage provides the key for a correct identification of the author's confessional identity.

29 Cf. Sebastian P. Brock, "A Syriac Collection of Prophecies of the Pagan Philosophers," in Sebastian P. Brock, *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1992), Essay VII, 203–246, here 230, No. 13.

30 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 230, No. 14.

31 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 230, No. 15.

nant, and the entire world was astonished, as the Word took his dwelling in the house of the handmaid named Mary.

5. Plotinus (فلوطيانوس) is then cited: He who is the root of all things that exist, whose Word is with him and whose holy name is the source of holiness, from him appeared the power of rational wisdom in God, through his eternal Word dwelling in him. He is the son of God from the beginning of his Divinity. God is the chief of all the substances; they are from him and in him and through him; his Word is rational, and he preserved everything that comprises his being.[32]
6. The next philosopher has the corrupt name Jujansitus (? جوجنسيطوس); in the Syriac version, a similar saying appears under the name of Poimandres.[33] He said: From which womb did this one appear and from which seed? Hermes answered: He appeared from a virgin handmaid without seed. The text seems to be corrupt, as Hermes answers again: The known Wisdom went from the womb and appeared in a crucified man. And again Hermes says: The well-known Will of God caused this One to appear next to Divinity; and this is the Son from the God who is in all and is all, and is omnipotent and the judge over all. The disciple says: And how was god born of god and the son from the law? Hermes answers: God from God, who became man through his will.[34]
7. The next prophecy is by Sibyl (سنبولا) concerning the cross: In the fifth era a mighty king shall rise. He shall order that an image will be in heaven, on which God will be raised up.[35]
8. Again Sibyl (though spelled differently: سبيله الحكيمة), interpreting the dreams of the hundred judges in Rome: In due time God shall appear in the south: no man shall be in contact with his mother, and a king who cannot resist him shall rise up against him; because of him, this king shall kill the children who will have appeared in the land of Judah. Rejoice forever; it was God, the Creator of heaven and earth, who took his dwelling in you. He is the Light that shall not be obscured.[36]
9. A statement attributed to Plato (افلاطن): The principle of all things is the substance of God; the second and the third are one thing.[37]

32 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 230–231, No. 20.
33 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 231, No. 21.
34 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 231, No. 21.
35 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 231, No. 22c.
36 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 231, No. 22a–b.
37 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 230, No. 17.

10. Again a statement by Hermes: The relationship is in the power of the Father, who is with him, and the Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son. He is the cause of everything in existence.[38]
11. Again Plato: God's substance possesses three persons and names, but it is the trinity of the names. He is known as one Divinity. The first cause is the compassionate life with all; the second cause is the creation of all; the third cause is the soul, the principle of life which vivifies all; these three attributes are one Divinity.[39]
12. Again a statement by Plato about the Eternal: God and with him the Word and with them the Spirit are together one substance. So it will be in eternity.
13. Then the author cites a philosopher called Anis or, perhaps, Aeneas (انيس): He was before time and is the Creator of the souls; he has three names, one power, three senses, one will. This is the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one God. He is the true God and Creator. This God is what the Christians confess in the Holy Trinity: the Creator as one in three attributes.

Subsequently, the author declares his intention to demonstrate the veracity and logical necessity of the Christian faith. The Christians confess that the Person of the divine Son unites with the human substance. He became one Messiah and one Son, who was called Jesus. The Jews and the Muslims deny this. The author indicates that he attempted to show the validity of the Christian faith first by logic and then by scriptural arguments based on the Qurʾān, which the Muslims regard as word of God, descended upon their prophet Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdallāh. The author believes that the Qurʾān confirms the truth of the Christian faith. He demonstrates this by citing the Qurʾānic verses Q 3:42–43 and 3:45–47, which discuss the Annunciation. The following Qurʾānic excerpt is Q 3:55–60. These verses speak about Jesus' assumption to heaven and his role as the judge at the end of time; they also prove that Jesus came into being by a word of God like Adam. The author also cites Q 2:87, which indicates that God gave Jesus clear proofs and supported him by the Holy Spirit. The next citation is Q 3:38–39, where it is promised to Zachariah that he will beget John the Baptist, who will confirm a "word from God."

After these Qurʾānic citations, the author proceeds to explain such Qurʾānic terms as "Word" and "Spirit." The author distinguishes between terms that are indicatory/significant (*lafẓa dālla*) and those that are not indicatory/significant

38 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 230, No. 19.
39 Cf. Brock, "Syriac Collection," 229, No. 8.

(*lafẓa ghayr dālla*). Spirit and Word of God are, according to him, indicatory/significant words, which refer to something else. The verses Q 3:45 and 2:87 are employed to illustrate this. The author insists that the Qur'ān's naming Jesus "Spirit of God" and "his Word" is not without significance. The author distinguishes again between Jesus and Christ. According to him, it is Christ who is the Spirit of God and his Word, but not Jesus. The proof is Q 3:45, which describes the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary. Q 3:47 confirms the miraculous conception. Mary conceived Jesus, who was in union with the Word, but nonetheless Jesus is a man and flesh like all humankind. Finally the author mentions the crucifixion and the resurrection.

The fragment ends with two citations from Bābā, the Ḥarrānian Pagan prophet or god. These citations are not found in the excerpts from the prophecies of Bābā handed down to us.[40] They concern the descent of the Light to earth. The second citation is incomplete.

I shall now offer some critical remarks.

1. We know neither the author nor the time when the original text of this disputation was written. It could have been written quite early, perhaps in the ʿAbbāsid era. On the other hand, this fragment gives the impression of having been put together from sections of diverse texts of different origins. If this is the case, this would more probably point to a later time of composition.
2. The author is a Jacobite, as already recognized by Graf. Despite this, however, he resorts to Nestorian Christology in order to demonstrate that even the Qur'ān recognizes both a divine and a human nature in Jesus the Word of God. The author's way of speaking about *two* natures and essences in Jesus Christ provides, according to him, a better foundation for a polemic against Islam than his own (albeit correct) Jacobite Christology.
3. The fragment can be divided into five parts. The first part is a discussion of the Qur'ānic statement that Christ did not die on the cross. The author argues that the Qur'ān is correct to state this, because it is true that the divinity of Christ did not die on the cross (only Christ's humanity did). The Qur'ān differentiates between divine and human attributes of the Messiah. According to Aristotelian logic, this is only possible if the Messiah is simultaneously God and man. In the second part, the Jacobite author justifies his use of Nestorian terminology concerning the distinction between Jesus and the Word. This distinction is important and is

40 Brock, "Syriac Collection," 233–236, Nos. 26–37; Franz Rosenthal, "The Prophecies of Bâbâ the Ḥarrânian," in *A Locust's Leg: Studies in Honour of S. H. Taqizadeh*, ed. Walter B. Henning and Ehsan Yarshater (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., 1962), 220–232.

confirmed by the Qurʾān. The third part lists several sayings attributed to Pagan philosophers which confirm the Christian faith. The fourth part aims at proving the veracity of Christian Christology by logical and scriptural arguments, the latter drawn from the Qurʾān. The author provides multiple Qurʾānic citations concerning the Messiah in support of his position. The fifth part consists of two citations from Bābā the Ḥarrānian.

4. The collection of prophecies of Pagan philosophers (in the third part of the fragment) has a *Vorlage* which must go back to a Greek work called *Theosophia*, likely written in Alexandria in the late fifth century. The original collection survived only in fragments, but was copied several times, and later collections show a certain variety. The Syriac collection published by Sebastian Brock contains a number of citations found also in our fragment, however with some small variations.[41]
5. The two citations of the Pagan prophet Bābā are not found in the Syriac collection of prophecies. In our fragment, they form the beginning of the fifth part and are not directly connected to the list of Pagan prophecies in the third part. Pagan prophecies (including Bābā's) are cited also in Dionysius bar Ṣalībī's (d. 1171) *Response to the Arabs*.[42]

To conclude: the fragment most probably comes from a later time and is probably assembled of sections of diverse origin. It is *not* in the style of Abū Rāʾiṭa and ʿĪsā ibn Zurʿa, though certain sections of the text may resemble their disputations. The author of our text was a Jacobite. His identity remains unknown and deserves further investigation.

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41 Brock, "Syriac Collection," as referenced in footnotes above.

42 Dionysius bar Ṣalībī, *A Response to the Arabs*, ed. and trans. Joseph P. Amar (Louvain: Peeters, 2005), 79–81 (text) / 72–74 (translation).

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CHAPTER 19

A Greco-Arabic Palimpsest from the Sinai New Finds: Some Preliminary Observations

Jack Tannous

Though there has been serious scholarly investigation of the Arabic Bible since the nineteenth century, the subject nevertheless lags a century—or perhaps several centuries—behind the investigation of the Greek, Latin, and Syriac Bible, especially the New Testament.[1] The past five years, however, have seen a surge of interest in the field. Works by Hikmat Kashouh[2] and Ronny Vollandt[3] have placed our knowledge of the Arabic Gospels and Arabic Pentateuch on a new footing, and a recently completed dissertation by Sara Schulthess on the letters of Paul in Arabic represents another fundamental point of reference.[4] In addition to these works, the publication of Sidney Griffith's landmark *The Bible in Arabic* in 2013 meant that there was at last a monograph which gave an introduction to and overview of this important subject and, crucially, which also placed the translation and use of the Bible in Arabic in a social and cultural context.[5]

1 Among important contributions, Ignazio Guidi, *Le traduzioni degli Evangelii in arabo e in etiopico* (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1888) should be mentioned and Graf, *GCAL*, 1:85–195, remains a fundamental point of reference. For a relatively recent survey of the state of the question in research on the Arabic New Testament, see Sara Schulthess, "Die arabischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments in der zeitgenössischen Forschung: ein Überblick," *Early Christianity* 3 (2012): 518–539.

2 Hikmat Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: The Manuscripts and their Families* (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012).

3 Ronny Vollandt, *Arabic versions of the Pentateuch: A Comparative Study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

4 Sara Schulthess, "Les manuscrits arabes des lettres de Paul. La reprise d'un champ de recherche négligé" (PhD diss., Radboud and Lausanne, 2016). The establishment of the *Biblia Arabica* series published by Brill, dedicated to the Bible in Arabic, represents another important development.

5 Sidney H. Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013). Griffith has done more than any other scholar publishing in English to advance the cause of the study of the Arabic Bible. Among his other publications on this topic, one might mention "Arguing from Scripture: The Bible in the Christian/Muslim Encounter in the Middle Ages," in *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Thomas J. Heffer-

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In this brief study, I will offer some observations on one particular New Finds manuscript from St. Catherine's: Sinai Greek New Finds Majuscule 2, or MG 2 (Gregory-Aland 0278). MG 2 is a palimpsest and a bilingual Greco-Arabic manuscript containing the letters of Paul.[6] My focus will not be on MG 2's Greek underwriting[7] or its Greek text,[8] but rather on the Arabic text that forms the right column on each of its pages.

The first thing that should be emphasized about MG 2 is its early date: this is a ninth-century manuscript.[9] Apart from MG 2, there are only seven known Arabic manuscripts containing the letters of Paul from the ninth and tenth centuries.[10] More than half of these come from St Catherine's: Sinai Ara-

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nan and Thomas E. Burman (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 29–58; "Les premières versions arabes de la Bible et leurs liens avec le syriaque," in *L'Ancien Testament en syriaque*, ed. Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet and Philippe Le Moigne (Paris: Geutner, 2008), 221–246; "The Bible in Arabic," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2: *From 600 to 1450*, ed. Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 123–142; and "When Did the Bible Become an Arabic Scripture?" *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 1 (2013): 7–23.

6 For its description, see *The New Finds of Sinai* (Athens: Ministry of Culture—Mt. Sinai Foundation, 1999), 141. Kurt Aland et al., *Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments*, 2nd ed. (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1994), 42, n. 6, gives the precise contents of MG 2 as: Romans 1:1–9, 24–30; 1 Corinthians 7:37–40; 8:1–6; 2 Corinthians 10:14–17; 11:2–13:5; Galatians 1:1–6:1; 6:11–18; Ephesians 1:1–8; 1:16–2:14; 3:9–4:8; 4:30–6:24; Philippians 1:1–3:4; 4:12–13, 17–21; Colossians 1:17–3:13; 3:21–4:18; 1 Thessalonians (all); 2 Thessalonians (all); Hebrews 1:1–10:12; Titus 2:11–3:2; 3:8–15; Philemon (all). Father Justin of the Sinai has made more detailed enumeration of the contents of MG 2, which I have used for the research underlying this paper and against which I checked the information given in the *Liste*.

7 This has already been done by Father Justin of the Sinai in an unpublished study that identified the undertexts as being both Biblical (Old Testament) and patristic (Antiochos of Mar Saba and an unknown—or at least not in the TLG—chronicle which covers the fifth century). I am grateful to Fr. Justin for sharing this study with me, his study of the contents of each page of MG 2, as well as images of MG 2. Without these, this article would not have been possible.

8 On which, see the brief observations by Barbara Aland in "Die neuen neutestamentlichen Handschriften vom Sinai," in *Bericht der Hermann Kunst-Stiftung zur Förderung der neutestamentlichen Textforschung für die Jahre 1982 bis 1984* (Münster, 1985), 76–89, here 81.

9 *The New Finds of Sinai*, 141.

10 For what follows, I rely on Bruce M. Metzger, *Early Versions of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 261–263; Sara Schulthess, "Liste des manuscrits arabes des lettres de Paul: résultats préliminaires," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 66 (2014): 153–167; and eadem, "Les manuscrits arabes des lettres de Paul," 53–102. Michel van Esbroeck, "Les versions orientales de la Bible: une orientation bibliographique," in *Interpretation of the Bible/Interpretation der Bibel/Interprétation de la Bible/Interpretacija svetega pisma* (Ljubljana: Slovenska Akademija Znanosti in Umetnosti, 1998), 402–415 provides a valuable overview of early translations of the Bible into Arabic, and Bruce M. Metzger, "Early Arabic Versions of the New Testament," in *On Language, Culture and Religion: in Honor of*

bic 73,[11] Sinai Arabic 151,[12] Sinai Arabic 155,[13] and Sinai Arabic 157.[14] Vatican Arabic 13, traditionally viewed as coming from Mar Saba, contains a translation of the Pauline epistles from the eighth or ninth century.[15] A manuscript

Eugene A. Nida, ed. Matthew Black and William A. Smalley (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 157–168, is an expert overview of the history of the Arabic Bible from late antiquity till the modern period, with a discussion of early manuscript witnesses at 160–162.

11 On Sinai Arabic 73, see Metzger, *Early Versions*, 263 and Schulthess, "Les manuscrits," 94 (no. 154). This is now also partially Paris Arabic 6725. See Gérard Troupeau, "Une ancienne version arabe de l'épître a Philémon," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 46 (1970–1971): 343–351 and Paul Géhin, "Manuscrits sinaïtiques dispersés I: les fragments syriaques et arabes de Paris," *Oriens Christianus* 90 (2006): 23–43, here 27–29. On Paris Arabic 6725, see also Schulthess, "Les manuscripts arabes," 90–91 (no. 143) and Metzger, *Early Versions*, 263, n. 1. On the nature of the translation in this manuscript, see Vevian Zaki, "The Textual History of the Arabic Pauline Epistles: One Version, Three Recensions, Six Manuscripts," in *Senses of Scripture, Treasures of Tradition: the Bible in Arabic among Jews, Christians and Muslims*, ed. Miriam L. Hjälm (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 392–424.

12 Edited and translated in Harvey Staal, *Mt. Sinai Arabic Codex 151. I, Pauline epistles* (CSCO 452–453 = ar. 40–41) (Louvain: E. Peeters, 1983) and idem, *Mt. Sinai Arabic Codex 151: II. Acts and Catholic Epistles* (CSCO 462–463 = ar. 42–43) (Louvain: E. Peeters, 1984). On this manuscript, see also Paul Féghali, "Les épîtres de Saint Paul dans une des premières traductions en Arabe," *Parole de l'Orient* 30 (2005): 103–130; Sebastian P. Brock, "A Neglected Witness to the East Syriac New Testament Commentary Tradition: Sinai, Arabic Ms 151," in Rifaat Y. Ebied and Herman G.B. Teule, *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage in Honour of Father Prof. Dr. Samir Khalil Samir S.I. at the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Leuven, Paris, and Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004), 205–215; Metzger, *Early Versions*, 261; and Schulthess, "Les manuscrits," 94 (no. 155).

13 Edited in Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *An Arabic Version of the Epistles of St. Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, with Part of the Epistle to the Ephesians; from a Ninth Century MS. in the Convent of S. Catharine on Mount Sinai* (London: C.J. Clay and Sons, 1894). See Metzger, *Early Versions*, 262 and Schulthess, "Les manuscrits," 94 (no. 156). A portion of this text was studied in R.H. Boyd, "The Arabic Text of I Corinthians in 'Studia Sinaitica no. 11': A Comparative, Linguistic, and Critical Study" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1942). Part of Sinai Arabic 155 is now BL Or. 8612; see F. Krenkow, "Two Ancient Fragments of an Arabic Translation of the New Testament," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 58 (1926): 275–285 and also Schulthess, "Les manuscrits," 84 (no. 117). On the Arabic translation contained in this manuscript, see Zaki, "The Textual History of the Arabic Pauline Epistles."

14 See Schulthess, "Les manuscrits," 95 (no. 158).

15 See Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, "The Pauline Epistle to Philemon from Codex Vatican Arabic 13 (Ninth Century CE). Transcription and Study," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 60 (2015): 341–371. Excerpts from the epistles in this manuscript were also published in J.M.A. Scholz, *Biblisch-kritische Reise in Frankreich, der Schweitz, Italien, Palästina und im Archipel, in den Jahren 1818, 1819, 1820, 1821, nebst einer Geschichte des Textes des N. T.* (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1823), 117–127. See Schulthess, "Les manuscrits," 97 (no. 172) and 130–132 where she makes a case for the manuscript having its origins in Ḥoms, not Mar Saba. See also Metzger, *Early Versions*, 261 and Kashouh, *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels*, 143, n. 37.

originally from Sigüenza, Spain, contains a page of Galatians translated in the ninth or tenth century.[16] Finally, there is St. Petersburg Arabic New Series 327, which contains a translation of the Pauline Epistles copied out in 892.[17] Mention might also be made of Sinai Arabic 310, which has been dated to the tenth or eleventh century.[18]

The second thing that should be emphasized about MG 2 is its bilingual nature: bilingual Greek-Arabic manuscripts are, relatively speaking, rare.[19] MG 2, however, is not just rare: it is unique—the only known bilingual Greek-Arabic manuscript of the letters of Paul.[20]

The presence of a two-column, bilingual manuscript raises the immediate question of how one column relates to the other: is the Arabic a translation

16 Galatians 1:1–15; 3:6–24 were published in Donatien de Bruyne and Eugène Tisserant, "Une feuille arabo-latine de l'épître aux Galates," *Revue biblique internationale* 7 (1910): 321–343; see Metzger, *Early Versions of the New Testament*, 262. This is now Vatican Latin 12900: see Giorgio Levi della Vida, "Manoscritti arabi di origine spagnola nella Biblioteca Vaticana," in *Collectanea Vaticana in honorem Anselmi M. Card. Albareda a Bibliotheca Apostolica edita*, vol. 2 (Città del Vaticano: Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, 1962), 133–189, here 177, and also Schulthess, "Les manuscripts," 99 (no. 184).

17 See Graf, *GCAL*, 1:173; Metzger, *Early Versions*, 262; and Schulthess, "Les manuscrits," 93 (no. 150). It was partially edited in Edvard Stenij, *Die altarabische Übersetzung der Briefe an die Hebräer, an die Römer und an die Corinther aus einem in St. Petersburg befindlichen Codex Tischendorfs vom Jahre 892 n. Chr.* (Helsinki: Frenckellska Tryckeri-Aktiebolaget, 1901). More recently, see Mats Eskult, "Translation Technique in the Epistle to the Hebrews as Edited by Edvard Stenij from Codex Tischendorf," in Hjälm, *Senses of Scripture*, 425–435.

18 For a "late tenth century" date, see Aziz Suryal Atiya, *The Arabic manuscripts of Mount Sinai: A Hand-List of the Arabic Manuscripts and Scrolls Microfilmed at the Library of the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), 8. For an eleventh-century date, see Murad Kamil, *Catalogue of All Manuscripts in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1970), 16. On this manuscript, see Schulthess, "Les manuscrits," 96 (no. 166).

19 For listings of Greco-Arabic bilingual NT manuscripts, see Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Paleography* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 56 and the slightly different one in idem, "Bilingualism and Polylingualism in Antiquity: With a Check-List of New Testament MSS Written in More than One Language," in *The New Testament Age: Essays in Honor of Bo Reicke*, ed. William C. Weinrich (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 2:327–334, here 331, which also included the sixteenth-century Greco-Arabic lectionary *l*1331 (Greek Patriarchate Alexandria 46) not mentioned in Metzger's 1981 list. The list in David C. Parker, *Codex Bezae: An Early Christian Manuscript and Its Text* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 60, included MG 2 (0278). These various listings gave between sixteen and eighteen bilingual Greek-Arabic NT manuscripts.

20 See Schulthess, "Les manuscrits," 118. Note that Vatican Latin 12900 (originally from Sigüenza, Spain), which contains part of Galatians, is also bilingual, but Latin-Arabic, not Greek-Arabic. See de Bruyne and Tisserant, "Une feuille arabo-latine de l'épître aux Galates," and Metzger, "Bilingualism and Polylingualism in Antiquity," 331.

of the Greek? Or, more generally, what is the *Vorlage* of the Arabic text? Preliminary study of MG 2 makes it clear that the Arabic has been translated from Syriac of the Peshitta. In the appendix to this article, I will offer a series of test passages that show that when the texts of the Greek and Arabic columns of MG 2 diverge, the Arabic agrees with the Peshitta against the Greek. Because of limited space, I will discuss here only a few particularly interesting and illustrative cases.

The first is Hebrews 5:7 on folio 90v. The Greek column here reads ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, "who, in the days of his flesh." The Arabic, however, reads ثم اذ كان ايضا لابس اللحم *thumma idh kāna ayḍan lābis al-laḥm*, "but when he was also wearing flesh." The Arabic here has clearly not been translated from the Greek; this translation, however, matches exactly the Peshitta's rendering of Hebrews 5:7: *āp kad besrā lbish* (*h*)*wā* ܐܦ ܟܕ ܒܣܪܐ ܠܒܫ ܗܘܐ, "but when he was clothed in the flesh." The same happens at Hebrews 10:5. Here, the Greek has σῶμα δὲ κατηρτήσω [sc. κατηρτίσω] μοι, "but you have prepared a body for me," a quote from Ps. 39 (40):7.[21] The Arabic, however, reads فاما الجسد فالبستني اياه *fa-ammā al-jasad, fa-albastanī iyyāhu*, "but as for the body, you have clothed me with it." This is reflects the Peshitta's *pagrā dēn albeshtān*(*i*) ܦܓܪܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܒܫܬܢܝ, "but you have clothed me in a body."

What makes these divergences from the Greek especially interesting is that they are particular to the Peshitta and in a Syriac context are important sources for the clothing imagery and clothing metaphors that are ubiquitous in late antique Syriac theological writings.[22] What is more, both passages were picked out in the later theological tradition as being potentially dangerous enablers of Nestorian Christologies: in the sixth century, Philoxenos of Mabbug famously pointed to them as places where the Peshitta's translators inserted their own opinions into their renderings.[23]

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21 Interestingly, the LXX differs from the Hebrew of Ps. 39 (40):7; see the discussion in Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans and Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1993), 500 and cf. Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 274.

22 See Sebastian P. Brock, "Clothing Metaphors as a Means of Theological Expression in Syriac Tradition," in *Typus, Symbol, Allegorie bei den östlichen Vätern und ihren Parallelen im Mittelalter. Internationales Kolloquium, Eichstätt 1981*, ed. Margot Schmidt and Carl Friedrich Geyer (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1982), 11–38, here 15, and idem, "The Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harklean Problem," in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis. Essays in Honour of Bruce M. Metzger*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 325–343, here 329.

23 See Brock, "The Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harklean Problem," 329.

There are other clear indications that this is a translation from Syriac, not from Greek. We find, for instance, places where the translator has mistaken the meaning of a Syriac word. At Galatians 1:15 the Greek reads: Ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν ὁ Θεὸς ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου, "But when it pleased God, who set me apart from my mother's womb …" The Arabic (fol. 8v), however, reads slightly differently: ولكنه لما سا من افررنى من بطن امي *Wa-lākinnahu lammā shāʾa man afrazanī min baṭn ummī*, "But when the one who set me apart from my mother's womb willed …" Unlike the Greek text, God is not mentioned explicitly and the Arabic matches, almost word-for-word, the Peshitta of Galatians 1:15: ܟܕ ܨܒܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܕܦܪܫܢܝ ܡܢ ܟܪܣ ܐܡܝ *Kad ṣbā dēn haw man d-parshan*(*i*) *men kres em*(*i*), "But when it pleased him who set me apart from my mother's womb."

What is also interesting to point out is how literal the Arabic translation is here: the Syriac renders the Greek εὐδόκησεν, "he was pleased," by the verb *ṣbā*, which can mean two different things: it can mean "he wanted" or "he willed." But it can also mean "he was pleased" to do something. The translator, working from a Syriac text and not a Greek one, and perhaps not having access to what the original Greek meant, understood *ṣbā* in its more common meaning "to will," and so translated it as *shāʾa*, a verb that has the same meaning in Arabic but which does not have the additional meaning of "to be pleased" that *ṣbā* does. This confusion can similarly be seen at Colossians 1:19 (fol. 48r). The Greek here reads ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ηὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι, "for in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell." The Arabic, however, reads الذي فيه شا ان يسكن جميع الكمال *alladhī fīhi shāʾa an yaskuna jamīʿ al-kamāl*, "in whom all the perfection willed to dwell." As was the case in Galatians 1:15, the Arabic here follows the Peshitta, ܕܒܗ ܗܘ ܨܒܐ ܟܠܗ ܡܘܠܝܐ ܠܡܥܡܪ *d-beh hu ṣbā kolleh mullāyā l-meʿmar*, "in whom all the fullness was pleased/willed to dwell." Once again, the translator either opted for a woodenly literal translation of *ṣbā* or simply did not realize that it could also mean "to be pleased" to do something.[24]

In other places, one sees clearly that the Arabic follows the wording of the Peshitta closely. At 1 Corinthians 7:38b (fol. 3r), the Greek column reads ὁ μὴ γαμίζων κρεῖσσον ποιήσει, "The one who does not marry will do better." The Arabic, however, renders this passage والذي لا يروح عدراه فاكثر يفعل جميلا *Wa-lladhī lā yuzawwiju ʿadhrāhu fa-akthara yafʿalu jamīlan*, "And the one who does not marry his virgin—he does better," following closely the Peshitta's ܘܐܝܢܐ ܕܠܐ

24 In defense of the anonymous translator's abilities, it should be pointed out that one can find similar confusion about the potential meanings of *ṣbā* in modern translations from Syriac.

ܝܬܝܪ ܕܠܐ ܝܗܒ ܒܬܘܠܬܗ ܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܫܦܝܪ ܥܒܕ *Wa-ynā d-lā yāheb btulteh yattirāʾit shappir ʿābed*, "And the one who does not marry his virgin—he does better," which also makes mention of marrying a virgin, whereas the Greek only refers to a virgin in the first part of the verse. If we continue on to 7:39, we can see the Arabic translator using exact cognates to render the Peshitta: for the Syriac ܐܢܬܬܐ ܟܡܐ ܕܚܝ ܒܥܠܗ *a(n)ttā kmā d-ḥay baʿlāh*, "the woman, so long as her husband remains alive," the Arabic gives المراه ما دام بعلها حيا *al-marʾa mā dāma baʿluhā ḥayyan*, "the woman, so long as her husband remains alive." Such passages make it clear just how easy translating from Syriac to Arabic could be.

There are, however, eleven different letters of Paul in MG 2 (including Hebrews), and we should not assume that they have all been translated by the same person or persons, and neither should we assume that they have all been translated from Syriac rather than Greek. The test passages I include in the appendix to this article suggest nevertheless that the Arabic translation has followed the Syriac of the Peshitta rather than a Greek exemplar throughout these eleven letters. More generally it should be noted that reading the Greek and Arabic columns of MG 2 in parallel, one regularly finds exact linguistic equivalences that suggest the translator was following closely the Syriac of a Peshitta exemplar.

This picture, however, is complicated by the fact that the Arabic translation of Ephesians contained in MG 2 agrees in several places with the Greek *against* the Syriac of the Peshitta. At Ephesians 3:9, for instance, the Greek reads Θ(ε)ῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι διὰ Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ, "(in) God, who created all things through Jesus Christ." The Arabic corresponds to this exactly, with في الله الذي خلق الكل بايسوع المسيح *fī Allāh alladhī khalaqa al-kull bi-Īsūʿ al-masīḥ*, "in God, who created everything through Jesus Christ," whereas the Peshitta has ܒܐܠܗܐ ܕܟܠ ܒܪܐ *ba-lāhā d-kol brā*, "in God, who created everything." Both the Greek and Arabic columns have God creating everything through Jesus Christ, but the Peshitta simply has God creating everything, without reference to Jesus. The Greek and the Arabic in MG 2 agree here against the Peshitta. At Ephesians 1:3, the Greek reads ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χω Ιυ, "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and the Arabic similarly has *bi-jamīʿ barakāt al-rūḥ fī l-samāʾ bi-Īsūʿ al-masīḥ*, "with all the blessings of the Spirit in heaven in Jesus Christ." The Peshitta here, however, refers only to Christ, not Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ: ܒܟܠ ܒܘܪܟܢ ܕܪܘܚ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ *b-kol burkān d-ruḥ ba-shmayyā ba-mshiḥā*, "with all the blessings of the Spirit in heaven in Christ."

Further study of MG 2 will be necessary to explain these phenomena, but several scenarios can easily be envisioned: it might be suggested, for instance, that the Syriac exemplar of Ephesians used by the translator had these variants

in it.[25] Or perhaps there has been some revision and correction of a translation originally made from Syriac into Arabic against a Greek exemplar. Revision could even potentially have been made against the Harklean translation, which agrees with the Greek and Arabic columns of MG 2 against the Peshitta at Ephesians 1:3 and 3:9.[26] That revision took place is a clear possibility: at Philippians 1:11, for example, what looks like a later hand has squeezed in "God" (Allāh) where it had not previously been, presumably to make it better reflect a Greek or Syriac *Vorlage*.[27] Differences could also potentially be explained with reference to the translation technique employed in Ephesians.[28] In all these cases, further study is required to determine what has exactly occurred: but whatever explanation is given for instances where the Greek and Arabic agree against the Peshitta, it nevertheless remains true that generally speaking, the vocabulary and syntax of the Arabic translation in MG 2 mirror closely that of the Peshitta.

A number of questions remain to be answered about the Arabic text of Paul's epistles in MG 2. What was the nature of the Syriac *Vorlage* of the text: was it from what is known as an Eastern type Peshitta text or a Western text type?[29] Does this particular translation have an afterlife and show up in places later

25 Though note that Barbara Aland and A. Juckel, *Das neue Testament in syrischer Überlieferung*, vol. 2.2: *Die Paulinischen Briefe: Korintherbrief, Galaterbrief, Epheserbrief, Philipperbrief und Kolosserbrief*. (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1995), 487 record no variants at these two verses in their manuscript collation, nor do they find any patristic witnesses to these verses (249, 280) that would agree with the Arabic translation here.

26 That a Chalcedonian would be in possession of a copy of part or all of the Harklean New Testament would have been eminently possible. For the Harklean minor Catholic Epistles at Sinai (in a portion of Sinai Syriac 5 dated to the eighteenth century), see John D. Thomas, "A List of Manuscripts Containing the Harclean Syriac Version of the New Testament," *Near East School of Theology Theological Review* 2 (1979): 26–32, here 29. It is worth noting here that Chalcedonian Syriac *Prophetologia* used the Syro-Hexaplar version of Ezekiel rather than the Peshitta: see Willem Baars, *New Syro-Hexaplaric Texts: Edited, Commented Upon and Compared with the Septuagint* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 2, n. 2.

27 Compare fol. 40r, *li-majd* [*Allāh*] *wa-li-karāmatihi* ("to the glory of God and to His honor") vs. εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον Θ(εο)ῦ ("to the glory and praise of God") vs. ܠܫܘܒܚܐ ܘܠܝܩܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ("to the glory and honor of God"). The Arabic follows the Syriac more closely than the Greek—speaking of "honor" rather than "praise." Without an explicit mention of "God," however, the Arabic would have diverged from both.

28 On the characteristics and limitations of Arabic Biblical translations, see Metzger, "Early Arabic Versions of the New Testament," 166. Additionally, Peter J. Williams' discussion of questions of word order in the Peshitta Gospels could be instructive to think with here; see his *Early Syriac Translation Technique and the Textual Criticism of the Greek Gospels* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2004), 203–247.

29 On this question, see Andreas Juckel, "A Guide to Manuscripts of the Peshitta New Testament," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 15 (2012): 79–163.

on, outside of MG 2 and even outside of the Chalcedonian tradition? Does the Arabic translation represent a translation that has been revised and corrected? If there has been revision, was it made against a Greek exemplar or perhaps the Harklean? Is there a consistent translation technique used throughout this version and do we have reason to believe that the same translator translated all of the epistles in this manuscript? And of course, there is the fundamental question of whether MG 2 represents a previously unknown translation.

Space considerations will not, alas, permit these questions to be addressed here. But they will allow one final point to be made: like so many others, my interest in the history of the Arabic Bible and my understanding of the fundamental importance of the Sinai's precious collection of Arabic manuscripts for the history of Christianity in the Middle East are due in no small part to the path-breaking scholarship of Sidney Griffith. It is an honor to dedicate this small study to him in gratitude and deep appreciation.

Appendix: Test Passages from Sinai Arabic New Finds Greek Majuscule 2

***Romans 1:3* (*1r*)**

Greek:

τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος ΔΑΔ κατὰ σάρκα
who was born from the seed of David according to the flesh

Arabic:

المولود بالجسد [من] دريه ال داود
al-mawlūd bi-l-jasad [*min*] *dhurriyyat āl Dāwūd*
who was born in the flesh from the seed **of the family** of David

Syriac Peshitta:

ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܒܒܣܪ ܡܢ ܙܪܥܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܕܘܝܕ
de-tiled ba-bsar min zarʿā d-bēt Dawid
who was born in the flesh from the seed **of the house** of David

***1 Corinthians 7:38b* (*3r*)**

Greek:

ὁ μὴ γαμίζων κρεῖσσον ποιήσει
The one who does not marry will do better.

Arabic:

والذي لا يروح عدراه فاكثر يفعل جميلا
wa-lladhī lā yuzawwiju ʿadhrāhu fa-akthara yafʿalu jamīlan
And the one who does not marry **his virgin**—he does better.

Syriac:

ܘܐܝܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܝܗܒ ܒܬܘܠܬܗ ܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܫܦܝܪ ܥܒܕ
wa-ynā d-lā yāheb btulteh yattirāʾit shappir ʿābed
And the one who does not marry **his virgin**—he does better.

***Galatians 1:15* (*fol. 8v*)**

Greek:

Ὅτε δὲ εὐδόκησεν ὁ Θ(εὸ)ς ὁ ἀφορίσας με ἐκ κοιλίας μητρός μου
But when it pleased **God**, who set me apart from my mother's womb …

Arabic:

ولكنه لما سا من افررنى من بطن امي
wa-lākinnahu lammā shāʾa man afrazanī min baṭn ummī
But when the one who set me apart from my mother's womb **willed** …

Syriac:

ܟܕ ܨܒܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܕܦܪܫܢܝ ܡܢ ܟܪܣ ܐܡܝ
kad ṣbā dēn haw man d-parshan(i) men kres em(i)
But when he who separated me from my mother's womb was pleased/ **willed** …

***Galatians 1:18* (*fol. 9r*)**

Greek:

Ἔπειτα μετὰ ἔτη τρία ἀνῆλθον εἰς Ἰεροσόλυμα ἱστορῆσαι Πέτρον
Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Peter … (ESV)

Arabic:

ومن بعد ثلثه سنين مضيت الى اؤرشليم لانظر الصفا
wa-min baʿd thalāthat sinīn maḍaytu ilā Urashalīm li-anẓura al-Ṣafā
And after three years, I went to Jerusalem to see **Cephas** …

Syriac:

ܘܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܬܠܬ ܫܢܝܢ ܐܙ(ܠ)ܬ ܠܐܘܪܫܠܡ ܕܐܚܙ ܟܝܦܐ …
w-men bātar tlāt shnin ez(l)et l-urishlem de-ḥze l-kipā …
And after three years, I went to Jerusalem to see **Cephas** …

***Galatians 4:28* (*fol. 19v*)**

Greek:

ὑμεῖς δέ ἀδελφοὶ
But you, brethren …

Arabic:

فاما نحن يا اخوتي
fa-ammā naḥnu yā ikhwatī
But as for **us**, **my** brethren …

Syriac:

ܐܚܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܚܝ
ḥnan dēn aḥay
But **we**, **my** brethren …

***Ephesians 1:3* (*24r*)**

Greek:

ἐν πάσῃ εὐλογίᾳ πνευματικῇ ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χω Ιυ
with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ **Jesus**

Arabic:

بجميع بركات الروح في السما بأيسوع المسيح
bi-jamīʿ barakāt al-rūḥ fī l-samāʾ bi-Īsūʿ al-masīḥ
with all the blessings of the Spirit in heaven in **Jesus** Christ

Syriac:

ܒܟܠ ܒܪܟܬܐ ܕܪܘܚ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ
b-kol burkān d-ruḥ ba-shmayyā ba-mshiḥā
with all the blessings of the Spirit in heaven in Christ

***Ephesians 3:9* (*fol. 28r*)**

Greek:

Θ(ε)ῷ τῷ τὰ πάντα κτίσαντι διὰ Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ
(in) God, who created all things **through Jesus Christ**

Arabic:

في الله الذي خلق الكل بايسوع المسيح
fī Allāh alladhī khalaqa al-kull bi-Īsūʿ al-masīḥ
in God, who created everything **through Jesus Christ**

Syriac:

ܒܐܠܗܐ ܕܒܪܐ ܟܠ
ba-lāhā d-kol brā
in God, who created everything

Philippians 1:8 (fol. 40r)

Greek:

μάρτυς γὰρ μοι ἐστὶν ὁ Θ(εό)ς, ὡς ἐπιποθῶ πάντας ὑμᾶς ἐν σπλάγχνοις Ἰ(ησο)ῦ Χ(ριστο)ῦ

For God bears me witness, how I long for you **all** in the affection of Jesus Christ.

Arabic:

وذلك ان الله يشهد لي ان كيف انا محب لكم برحمه يسوع المسيح

wa-dhālika anna Allāh yashhadu lī anna kayfa anā muḥibb lakum bi-raḥmat Yasūʿ al-masīḥ

Because God bears me witness, how I love you with the mercy of Jesus Christ.

Syriac:

ܣܗܕ ܗܘ ܠܝ ܓܝܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܡܚܒ ܐܢܐ ܠܟܘܢ ܒܪܚܡܘܗܝ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ

sāhed (h)u li gēr Alāhā da-ykannā maḥḥeb (e)nā lkon b-raḥmaw(hy) d-Ishoʿ mshiḥā

For God bears me witness, how I love you with the mercies of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:19 (fol. 48r)

Greek:

ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ηὐδόκησεν πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι

For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell.

Arabic:

الذي فيه شا ان يسكن جميع الكمال

alladhī fīhi shāʾa an yaskuna jamīʿ al-kamāl

in whom all the perfection **willed** to dwell.

Syriac:

ܕܒܗ ܗܘ ܨܒܐ ܟܠܗ ܡܘܠܝܐ ܠܡܥܡܪ

d-beh hu ṣbā kolleh mullāyā l-meʿmar
in whom all the fullness was pleased/**willed** to dwell.

***1 Thessalonians 2:12* (*fol. 62r*)**

Greek:

τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς ...
who calls you ...

Arabic:

الذي دعاكم ...

alladhī daʿākum ...
who **called** you ...

Syriac:

ܗܘ ܕܩܪܟܘܢ

haw da-qrākon ...
who **called** you ...

***2 Thessalonians 2:16* (*fol. 76r*)**

Greek:

ὁ ἀγαπήσας ἡμᾶς καὶ δοὺς παράκλησιν αἰωνίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα ἀγαθὴν ἐν χάριτι
who loved us and gave eternal comfort and good hope by grace ...

Arabic:

الذي احبنا واعطانا عرا الابد ورجاءً صالحاً بنعمته...

alladhī aḥabbanā wa-aʿṭānā ʿazāʾ al-abad wa-rajāʾan ṣāliḥan bi-niʿmatihi ...
who loved us and gave **us** eternal consolation and good hope by **his** grace ...

Syriac:

ܗܘ ܕܐܚܒܢ ܘܝܗܒ ܠܢ ܒܘܝܐܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ ܘܣܒܪܐ ܛܒܐ ܒܛܝܒܘܬܗ

haw da-ḥban w-ya(h)b lan buyyāʾā da-l-ʿālam w-sabrā ṭābā b-ṭaybuteh …
who loved us and gave **us** eternal consolation and good hope by **his** grace …

Hebrews 5:7 (90v)

Greek:

ὃς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ
who, in the days of his flesh

Arabic:

ثم اذ كان ايضا لابس اللحم

thumma idh kāna ayḍan lābis al-laḥm
when he was also **wearing flesh**

Syriac:

ܐܦ ܟܕ ܒܣܪܐ ܠܒܝܫ ܗܘܐ

āp kad besrā lbish (h)wā
and when he was **clothed in the flesh**

Hebrews 10:5 (fol. 109r)

Greek:

σῶμα [δὲ] κατηρτήσω μοι
but you have prepared a body for me …

Arabic:

فاما الجسد فالبستني اياه

fa-ammā al-jasad, fa-albastanī iyyāhu
but as for the body, **you have clothed me** with it …

Syriac:

ܦܓܪܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܠܒܫܬܢ

pagrā dēn albeshtān(*i*) …
but **you have clothed me** in a body …

Titus

The text is lacunose and fragmentary, but note Arabic calques on the Peshitta text, e.g., at 3:11 (fol. 111r) εἰδὼς ("knowing") = وتكن تعلم *wa-takūn taʿlam* ("be [lit. 'you will be'] knowing") = ܘܗܘܝܬ ܝܕܥ *wa-hwayt yādaʿ* ("be [lit. 'you were'] knowing"). The Arabic here mirrors a characteristically Syriac grammatical construction which is used to express desire or the subjunctive.[30]

Philemon 9–10 (fol. 113r)

Greek:

[διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην μᾶλλον παρακαλῶ, τοιοῦτος ὢν ὡς Παῦλος πρεσβύτης νυνὶ δὲ κ]αὶ δέσμιος Χ(ριστο)ῦ Ἰ(ησο)ῦ· παρακαλῶ σε περὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ τέκνου …
[on account of love, I request of you, I, Paul, now an old man] and prisoner of **Christ Jesus**, I implore you concerning my child …

Arabic:

اطلب الي [ك] انا بولس الذي انا شيخ كما تعرف فاما الان فاسير ايسوع المسيح اطلب اليك في ابني…

aṭlubu ilay[*ka*] *anā Būlus alladhī anā shaykh kamā taʿrif fa-ammā al-ān fa-asīr Īsūʿ al-masīḥ. Aṭlubu ilayka fī ibnī* …
I ask of you, I, Paul, who am an old man, **as you know**, but as for now, I am a prisoner of **Jesus Christ**. I ask of you concerning my son …

30 On this construction, cf. Rubens Duval, *Traité de grammaire syriaque* (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1881), 320, § 334c–d and Takamitsu Muraoka, *Classical Syriac: A Basic Grammar with Chrestomathy*, 2nd rev. ed. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), 68, § 87. See also Joshua Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic Based Mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium* (CSCO 276 = Subsidia 28) (Louvain: Secretariat du Corpus SCO, 1967), 436, § 320.2 and cf. Wolfdietrich Fischer, *A Grammar of Classical Arabic*, 3rd rev. ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 121, § 222.2.

Syriac:

> ܡܛܠ ܚܘܒܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܒܥܐ ܗܘ ܒܥܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܢܟ ܐܢܐ ܦܘܠܘܣ ܕܐܝܬܝ
> ܣܒܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܝܕܥ ܐܢܬ ܗܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܐܣܝܪܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܒܥܐ
> ܐܢܐ ܡܢܟ ܥܠ ܒܪܝ
>
> *meṭṭul ḥubbā dēn meb'ā (h)w bā'e (e)nā menāk enā Pawlos di-tay sābā ayk d-yāda' a(n)t hāshā dēn āp asirā d-Isho' mshiḥā w-bā'e (e)nā menāk 'al ber(y) …*
>
> For the sake of love then, I ask you exceedingly, I, Paul, who am an old man, **as you know**, but now, I am a prisoner of **Jesus Christ**, and I ask of you concerning my son …

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CHAPTER 20

An Arabic Manuscript of the Visions of Anba Shenouda: Edition and Translation

Jason R. Zaborowski

At the start of WW I, when the last volume of Johannes Leipoldt's edition of Shenoute's *opera omnia* was published,[1] there also appeared an edition of Shenoutiana in Arabic that has received considerably less critical attention from Coptologists.[2] This edition was Adolf Grohmann's German study of the *Visionen Apa Shenoute von Atripe*, which he issued in two installments of *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* in 1913 and 1914. Grohmann's publications comprised short studies featuring translations and editions of the Ethiopic and Arabic recensions of the *Visions of Shenoute*, showing that the text presented an interesting picture of the fourth- and fifth-century Archimandrite Shenoute participating in a heavenly church mass with the saints of the Bible.

The reality that Shenoute's Coptic legacy is absent from pre-modern Western Christian literature has *de facto* rendered him a stranger to the Western scholarship in the field of church history. Leipoldt's publication of the *opera omnia* (1908 and 1913) brought needed attention to Shenoute in Western scholarship, albeit that his assessment (and David Bell's later edition of the *Life of Shenoute*) has portrayed Shenoute as a provincial and dogmatic promoter of a "christ-less" spirituality, alien to normative Christianity.[3] But unlike the case of Western church history, the legacy of Shenoute was not interrupted in the Arabic-speaking world, where the literature bearing his persona was translated and augmented in Arabic language sources, such as the *Visions of Shenoute*, which portrays the Shenoutian tradition as grounded in a catholic,

1 Johannes Leipoldt, *Sinuthii Archimandritae Vita et Opera Omnia*, CSCO 42 and 73 (Paris: E Typographeo Reipublicae and Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1908 and 1913).

2 Shenoute the great Archimandrite of upper Egypt lived approximately from 348–466. His robust monastic legacy is preserved primarily in Coptic discourses and canons. For a catalogue and introduction to Shenoute's works, see Stephen Emmel, *Shenoute's Literary Corpus*, CSCO 599–600 (Louvain: Peeters, 2004).

3 David N. Bell, *Besa: The Life of Shenoute: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1983), 20, wherein Bell quotes Leipoldt's assessment of Shenoute's spirituality as "christ-less."

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non-provincial, Christianity. The ecumenicity of Shenoute's legacy deserves more attention than this chapter can grant to it,[4] but suffice it to say briefly that the reader will notice from the present manuscript of the *Visions of Shenoute* that his legacy in Arab Christianity is not narrowly Egyptian in its scope, nor christ-less in its spirituality.

As for Grohmann's edition of the Arabic text, he based his work on photographs of the British Museum MS Add. 22691, dated AD1752 (= 1468AM). He describes that ms as a slightly water-damaged codex with abrasion marks occasionally appearing over some of the letters, written in the colloquial style ("κοινὴ διάλεκτος").[5] Grohmann also describes the orthography of the script, and his conventions for expressing orthographic peculiarities of Christian Arabic, such as the use or absence of diacritical points on some consonants, and the depiction of final vowels. While Grohmann notices Syriacisms and Copticisms within the text, he is more inclined to posit "eine koptische Vorlage," even though (to my knowledge) we have no extant Coptic version for making comparisons to the Arabic or Ethiopic.[6] He describes the work in a succinct introduction to its contents and he suggests that a comparison with the *Apocalypse of Peter* may be particularly promising for analyzing the text.[7]

Apart from Grohmann's German translation there has been very little scholarship undertaken on this text over the last century and (until now) it has not been available in an English translation. But in January of 2014, Mr. Hany Takla of the St. Shenouda the Archimandrite Society of Coptic Studies kindly provided me with digital copies of two manuscripts containing unedited recensions of the Arabic *Visions of Shenute* for my examination.[8] The Society owns

4 I shall present a more elaborate discussion of Shenoute's ecumenicity in another essay that I am preparing as a companion to this chapter; that publication shall compare the present manuscript with another unpublished manuscript of the *Visions of Shenoute*.

5 Adolf Grohmann, "Die im Äthiopishen, Arabischen und Koptischen erhaltenen Visionen Apa Schenute's von Atripe," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 68 (1914): 1–46, here 1.

6 Ibid., 3. Despite Emmanouela Grypeou's claims that "[t]hese texts in Arabic, Ethiopic and Coptic were edited and translated into German by Adolf Grohmann in 1913," Grohmann shows no awareness of an extant Coptic version. See Emmanouela Grypeou, "'*The Visions of Apa Shenute of Atripe*': An Analysis in the History of Traditions of Eastern Christian Apocalyptic Motifs," in *Eastern Crossroads: Essays on Medieval Christian Legacy*, ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2013): 157–167, here 160.

7 Grohmann, 1914, 4: "… wo durch deutliche Anklänge an die Petrusapokalypse die Schilderung für uns besonders interessant zu werden verspricht."

8 I wish to extend deepest gratitude to Hany N. Takla for entrusting me with the copies of these manuscripts, and to his St. Shenoute the Archimandrite Society (Los Angeles, California) for its promotion of Coptic scholarship.

both manuscripts containing the text, catalogued under the numbers 116 and 166. The provenance and dating of the manuscripts require more research. My initial judgment is that both manuscripts are pre-Muhammad ʿAli (1769–1849). The present chapter is an edition and translation of MS 116. This edition adheres to the line-by-line layout of the manuscript; likewise the translation follows a literalist approach to preserving Arabic diction, and even word order when possible.

St. Shenouda the Archimandrite Society MS 116 is a paper manuscript with folia dimensions ca. 20.5 cm × 15 cm. The greater codex has come unbound and some sections are fragmentary or lost, but the leaves of this text in the codex are wholly intact, despite damage to the bottom of folio 2, which results in a lacuna of two text lines on the recto and verso. Those lines can be reasonably supplemented by parallels in Grohmann's edition. The text comprises just 22 pages (or 11 folia), each preserving 12 to 15 lines of text—usually of fourteen lines, scribed in a fine *naskhī* script with lovely flowing tails of the *yā'*s and *sīn*s; what could be described as a relaxed, confident hand.

This edition and translation is a modest way of honoring Father Griffith on his retirement, with gratitude for his patience as a mentor in the reading of Arabic and Syriac manuscripts, and for the light he has shed on indigenous Christian literature of the Middle East.

Page 1

{بس}م {ال}اب والا بن والروح القدس ال{اه} و{احد}
ميمر قاله الاب البطريرك انبا كيرلص بطريرك مدينة
الاسكندرية يشرح فيه كراسة القديس الجاهر
والنبي الكريم انبا شنوده رئيس المتوحدين في الرويا
الالهية منجل كنيسته الابكار الذي[9] في السموات
وتكريزها في اليوم الرابع عشر من شهْر ابيب بركة
صلاته المقدسة تكون معنا ومع الناسخ الحقير. امين.

****

قال الاب الطاهر والنبي الكريم انبا شنوده رئيس
المتوحدين كان مني رفعه وانا داخل البرية الجوانية
انا وويصا تلميذي لاصنع قداس على مياة نهر جيعون
لكي الاهنا الرحوم السيد يسوع المسيح يصعدهم لجدهم
وفيما انا امشي سمعت صوتاً عظيم في اعلا السموات
واجتمع اليه جمعاً كثيراً جداً فذهب عقلي انا المسكين
عندما سمعت هذا الامر العجيب فالتفت بوجهي نحو
الشرق ورشمت داتي بعلامة الصليب كبسم الاب

9 This edition takes the liberty to correctly render diacritical points of Arabic characters. Uniformly, the scribe of this manuscript reduces the pointing of ث, ذ, ض, and ظ (ت, د, ص, and ط) throughout the text in pronouns such as الذي, ذلك, and هذا\هذه (الدي, دلك, and هدا\هده) and in forms of the word عظيم (عطيم). Words like تلميذ and كثير, appear as تلميد and كتير. This writing habit appears often in Christian Arabic manuscripts. In the present edition, { } surrounds lacunae in the text. The straight brackets, [ ], surround text that is supplemented from another manuscript.

Page 1

(1.1)[10] In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, The One God.
(1.2) A sermon that the Father Patriarch Anba Kyrillos, Patriarch of the city of Alexandria, spoke, in which he elucidates the sanctity of the famous, holy, and beneficent Prophet Anba Shenouda, head of the solitaries, in the theological vision on account of his Church of the Virgin that is in the heavens and its consecration on the fourteenth day of the month Abīb [11th Coptic Month]. **(1.3)** Blessing of his holy prayer be with us and with the wretched copyist. Amen.

****

(11.1) The pure father and glorious prophet Anba Shenouda, the Archimandrite said: **(11.2)** It happened to me,[11] while I was inside the inner desert, I and Besa,[12] my disciple, in order to prepare a mass upon the waters of the Nile River[13] so that our merciful God the Lord Jesus Christ would raise them up, just as their ancestor.
(11.3) While I was walking I heard a great voice in the height of the heavens, very many crowds gathered unto it. **(11.4)** My mind departed—humble I—when I heard this astonishing thing. I turned my head to the direction of the east, and I crossed myself with the sign of the cross, as "in the name of the Father,

10 Segmentation of this text follows the enumeration of Grohmann's edition (1914) in order to facilitate comparisons between the publications.
11 For this grammatical form, see VI.3; Grohmann correlates it with the Coptic form of "it happened to me."
12 The Arabic renders the Coptic form of the name Besa (Ⲃⲏⲥⲁ) as Wīṣā.
13 The Arabic جيعون follows the Greek word for the Nile River, Γηών (Hebrew: גיחון), as appearing in LXX Jeremiah 2:18.

Page 2

{و}الا بن والروح القدس وفيما عقلي مبسوطا منجل ه{ذه}
الرويا العجيبة التي رايتها واذا قد نظرت سلماً نازلاً
من السمآ على الارض ونظرت انسان منير جالساً على
راس السلم فقال لي تعالى واصعد الى هاهنا واني قلت
لويصا تلميذي لجلس هاهنا حتى امضى واعلم السر وارجع
اليك واني لم اتكاسل لكن قمت ومضيت ومشيت صاعداً
على الدرج وللوقت لما صعدت[14] الى قوق حملني الملاك على
سحابة نيرة واصعدني الى العلا وسمعت صفوف الملايكة
يرتلوا قايلين الليلوا[15] باركوا الله في السموات. باركوه في
العلا. باركوه في بتيات قوته. باركوه ملايكته جميعاً. باركوه
جنوده كلهم. باركوه الشمس والقمر. باركوه نجوم السما.
باركوه النور والظلمة. باركوه سما السموات والمياه الذي
فوق السموات. باركوا الله في الارض كلها. فليباركوا اسم
الرب لانه قال فكانوا وامر فخلقوا وضع امر الم يتجاوزه

14 The present edition displays superlinear characters approximately as they appear in the manuscript.

15 Sic.

Page 2

the Son, and the Holy Spirit." **(11.5)** And when my mind was pleased on account
of this astonishing vision which I saw; and when I had noticed a staircase descending
from heaven to the earth, and I saw an illuminated man sitting at
the top of the staircase; then, he said to me, "come and ascend up here." **(11.6)** And I told
Besa, my disciple, "sit here until I come; I will learn the secret and return
to you." **(11.7)** I did not delay, rather I arose, proceeded and walked ascending
up the steps. And during the time I was ascending upstairs the angel carried me upon
an illuminated cloud and led me up to the height. **(11.8)** I heard divisions of angels
singing, saying "Alleluiah! God be blessed in the heavens! Bless Him in
the heights; bless Him in the firmness of his strength! Bless Him, all His angels! Bless Him
all His armies! Bless Him, sun, and moon! Bless Him stars of heaven!
Bless Him, light and darkness! Bless Him, heaven of heavens, and water that is
above the heavens! Bless God in all the earth! Let the name of the Lord
be blessed, because He spoke—and they existed; He commanded—and they were created; He set
forth a command that they[16] have not surpassed."

16 Grohmann transcribes this verb as a 3rd person plural: يتجاوزوه

Page 3

وبعد ذلك شميت بخور عظيم نازلاً من جواً السمآ اي نوع
هو ذلك البخور. هذا الذي لم اشم مثله على الارض. وسمعت
الملايكة كلهم يرتلوا امام ذلك البخور واما انا فمن حلاوة
اصواتهم نمت حينذاً.[17] اقامني الملاك قايلا لي قوم لماذا
انت نايم الان واهل السما كلهم نازلين وصاعدين بخدمة
الله. لست تعلم ايها الانسان الشقي عظم خطية الذي
ينام في كنيسة الله والقديسين والقسوس واقفين على
المذبح وملايكة الله المقدسين محيطين به. قوم الان ياخونا
الحبيب لعل الله يلومك عندما يفتقدك لانه خوف عظيم
يكون للانسان عندما يقف امام منبر الله. وفيما الملاك
يتكلم معي اذ وصلنا باب كنيسة الابكار الذي فوق
⟨Lacuna-torn leaf ~ 2–3 lines⟩
[السمآء. فذهبت عنى السحابة النور وانا انظر بعيني وقد
قبلوها الملايكة وفرحوا معها قايلين لها حسناً اتيتنا
اليوم بهذه النفس البسيطة الذي الله والملايكة]

17 Sic. Read, حينئذ.

Page 3

And after that, I smelled intense incense descending from the air[18] of heaven. Of what sort
was that incense? It was that like which I had not smelled on earth! **(II.10)** And I heard
the angels, all of them, sing before that incense. And as for me, from the sweetness
of their voices I fell asleep at that time. **(III.1)** The angel awakened me saying to me: "Arise! Why
are you sleeping now while the inhabitants of heaven—all of them—are descending and arising in the service
of God? **(III.2)** Do you not know, O wretched man,[19] the gravity of sin which it is
to sleep in the church of God while the saints and the priests are standing at
the altar while the holy angels of God surround it?[20] **(III.3)** Awaken, now, our beloved
brother; perhaps God will rebuke you when He misses you, because what a great fear
it is for the man when he stands before the rostrum of God!"[21] **(III.4)** And while the angel
was speaking with me we arrived at the door of the Church of the Virgin which is above
[the heavens. **(III.5)** And I had forgotten the cloud of light, and I saw with my eyes,
the angels had met her and rejoiced with her, saying to her, "It is good she gave us
today this simple soul which God and the angels][22]

18 Or, from within, من جواً.

19 Grohmann's edition seems to completely misread this phrasing.

20 The text employs direct dialogues between angel and Shenouda to describe the setting, rather than the narrator's voice.

21 These Arabic constructions seem to reflect the Coptic second tense. Here the word منبر translates the Greek βῆμα; cf. below in this manuscript, p. 21, line 9.

22 Text sections surrounded by straight brackets—[ ]—indicate lacunae that are supplemented by portions of Grohmann's edition (1914).

Page 4

يحبونها منجل صومها وصلاواتها نقال[23] الان لتقف
معنا في وسطنا اليوم. وتنظر عظم هذا العيد البهيج
العظيم الفرح لان هذا هو يوم عيد كنيسة الابكار وتكريزها
ثم مسكوني وحملوني الى كنيسة الابكار ووضعوني في
المذبح المقدس ونظرت الصعيد على المذبح ببيضة مثل
التلج ونظرت الاربعة وعشرين قيسيس[24] الروحانيين
كهنة الحق حول المذبح ورائيت الرسل ايضا محيطين
بالمذبح ونظرت رؤسا الاساقفة الذين ارضوا الله وصنعوا
ارادته وقطعوا بكلمة الحق باستقامة حول المذبح واقفين
ورائيت القسوس الذين حفظوا طهارتهم جيدا حول
المذبح المقدس واقفين. وانا كنت انظرهم وانا داهش
[من اجل] المجد والك[ر]امة الذي يعطيها الله لبني البشر هولاي
⟨Lacuna-torn leaf ~ 2–3 lines⟩
[من قبل الله هولآء الذين يصنعون ارادته اذ يكونوا على الارض.
ومن بعد هذا ابتدوا في القداس المقدس ورايت قوماً مزينين]

23 Sic. Read, نقول.
24 Sic. Read, قسيس.

Page 4

love, on account of its fasting and its prayers. **(III.7)** We say, now, to stand
with us in our midst today. Look at the enormity of this delightful, grand,
joyous festival, **(III.8)** because this is the day of the festival of the Church of
the Virgin and its consecration."
(III.9) Then they grasped me and they carried me to the Church of the Virgin
and they placed me at
the holy altar and I saw the burnt offering on the altar, white as
snow, and I observed twenty-four priests of the spiritual ones,
priests of righteousness around the altar. I saw the Apostles also surrounding
the altar and I observed archbishops who were pleasing God undertaking
His will and they divided the Word of Righteousness uprightly around the
altar, standing.
And I saw the priests who kept their purity well around
the holy altar standing. **(III.10)** I was observing them, being amazed
[on account of] the glory and the [magnanimity] that God is granting to sons
of men: those
[who undertake His will while existing on the earth. **(IV.1)** After this,
they began the holy mass and I saw an august group]

Page 5

وهم قايمن في وسط الكنيسة يتكلمون بلغات السمايئين
يرتلوا مع داوود وسمعتهم يفسرون ما يرتلوا به.
وهم يقولوا الليلويا وبعد هذا التفسير الذي قالوه
ثلاثة مرار وان الرسل خرجوا في وسط الكنيسة ورفعوا
البخور وقالوا الليلويا ومن بعد هذا نظرت بولص الرسول
قد خرج يقرى البولص وهو هذا الفصل فاما القيه الاولة
الى اخر الفصل. ثم خرج يوحنا الانجيلي وقرا[25] فصل من
رسالته التي هي القتاليقون. وانتم ايضا الذين فيكم
مسحة من روح القدس وتعرفون كل شي الى اخر الفصل. وبعد
ذلك خرج لوقا الانجيلي وقرى فصل من قصص الرسل
ان الانبيا من صمويل والذين اتوا من بعده قد تكلموا
ونادوا من اجل هذا الايام الى اخر الفصل ومن بعد ذلك
روسا الملايكة والملايكة والشاروبيم والصارافيم

25 Hamzas are routinely omitted in this manuscript. Read, قرأ.

Page 5

who were arising in the middle of the church, speaking in languages of the heavenly ones,
singing with David. **(IV.2)** And I heard them explaining what they were singing.
And they were saying "Alleluiah!" **(IV.3)** And after this explanation which they spoke
three times, **(IV.4)** the Apostles departed in the middle of the church and they raised
the incense, and said "Alleluiah!" **(IV.5)** And after this, I observed Paul the Apostle
had emerged, reading *Paul*:[26] it is this chapter from which he presented, the beginning
to the end of the chapter. **(IV.6)** Then John the Evangelist emerged and read a chapter
from his Epistle, that is the *Catholikon*. And you also: upon whom
is an anointing from the Holy Spirit, and you know everything to the end of the chapter. **(IV.7)** And after
that Luke the Evangelist emerged and read a chapter from *Acts of the Apostles*,
namely the prophets from Samuel and those who came after him, who had spoken
and proclaimed about this days[27] unto the end of the chapter. **(IV.8)** And after that
the archangels and angels and cherubim and seraphim

26 Grohmann's manuscript reads, الابسطلس.
27 A grammatical error appearing in the Arabic: هذا الايام. Grohmann: هذه الايام.

Page 6

وكل طغمات السمائيين رفعوا اصواتهم وقالوا ثلاثة
تقديسات مع الاربعة وعشرون قيسيس ورايت بطرس
الرسول ومرقص الانجيلي. والرسل كلهم قد صعدوا على درج
المذبح واحاطوا به مع الاربعة وعشرون قسيس. وجا
داوود المرتل النبي العظيم ملك اسراييل صرخ قايلا سبحوا
الرب تسبحتا جديدة لان بركته دلية في كنايس قديسية.
ومن بعد ذلك جا متى الانجيلي وصرخ قايلاً لما جا الرب
يسوع الى نواحي قيسارية فيلبس الى اخر الفصل الذي
يليق بالتكريز لكنيسة الابكار الذي في السموات. ومن بعد
هذا ابتدي بطرس بالقداس المقدس واذا القديس
اسطافانوس رئيس الشماسة واول الشهدا يخدم
معه شماساً حتى كملوا الخدمة المقدسة. ومن بعد هذا
نظرت ربنا يسوع المسيح قد اتا مع ملايكته المقدسين
والشاروبيم والصارافيم حوله. وجلس على المذبح

Page 6

and all the heavenly hosts raised their voices and said the
Trishagion with twenty-four priests. And I saw Peter
the Apostle and Mark the Evangelist. And the Apostles all of them had mounted upon the steps
of the altar and surrounded it, with the twenty-four priests. And David
the great Prophet Psalmist, King of Israel, called out saying, "Praise
the Lord, praising anew, because His blessing is forever in holy churches."
(IV.10) After that Matthew the Evangelist came and called out saying, "When the Lord
Jesus came to the districts of Caesarea Philippi," to the end of the chapter that
is suited to the consecration of the Church of the Virgin, which is in the heavens. **(IV.11)** And after
this Peter began the holy mass, and when Saint
Stephen, Archdeacon and Protomartyr served
with him as a deacon, they completed the holy service. **(IV.12)** After this
I observed our Lord Jesus Christ had come with his holy angels
and cherubim and seraphim around him. **(IV.13)** He sat at the altar

Page 7

فقبلته الرسل واولاً واحدا بعد واحدا وسجدوا له كطقسهم
فباركهم كلهم. ونظرت بعيني الملايكة وقد صار واصفين
في الكنيسة. ورايت الصديقين كلهم الذي صنعوا ارادت
الله وحفظوا وصاياه صاعدين واحد بعد واحد والملايكة
مثل الصور عليهم. كل واحد واحد يصعد الى فوق في صفوف
الملايكة والانبيا كطقسهم والبطاركة كطقوسهم. والاساقفة
والقسوس والشماسة والابودياتون والاغنسطسيين[28]
والشهدا والمعترفين والرهبان والصديقين وكل مومنين
بربنا يسوع المسيح اجمعين. رايتهم كلهم يصعدون فوق على
المذبح وهم طغمة وكل واحداً واحداً من الملايكة التي
في الصفوف يقبلوهم ويمشون معهم يفرح ويقدمونهم
امام ربنا يسوع المسيح يسجدوا له اولاً ثم يتنالوا من القربان
الذي هو جسد سيدنا يسوع المسيح من يد بطرس الرسول
وياخذوا الدم الكريم من يد اسطافانوس رئيس الشماسة
ومن بعد هذا اتوا

28 See page 12 of this manuscript for the Arabic transliteration of ὑποδιάκονοι and ἀναγνῶσται.

Page 7

and the apostles kissed him, and first one-by-one they bowed to him according to their rite,
and all of them blessed him. **(IV.14)** I observed with my eyes the angels who had been giving praise
in the church. And I saw the righteous ones, all of them who had undertaken the will
of God and kept His commandments mounted one-by-one; and the angels
like duplicates upon them—each one-by-one mounting atop the ranks
of the angels; and the prophets according to their rite; and the patriarchs according to their rite; and the bishops
and priests and deacons and subdeacons and readers[29]
and the martyrs and the confessors and monks and saints and all the believers
in our Lord Jesus Christ gathered. I saw all of them mounting up at
the altar. And they were a [heavenly] host and each, one-by-one, of the angels who
were in ranks, greeting them and walking with them, rejoicing and preceding
before our Lord Jesus Christ, prostrating to Him first, **(IV.15)** then partaking of the host—
which is the body of our Lord Jesus Christ—from the hand of Peter the Apostle,
and receiving the precious blood from the hand of Stephen the Archdeacon.
(IV.16) After this they went

29 Here the Arabic transliterates the Greek titles for subdeacons (*hupodiakonoi* < الابوذياتونين (sic) < ὑποδιάκονοι) and readers (*anagnōstai* < الاغنسطسيين < ἀναγνῶσται).

Page 8

موضع المأ فرايت انساناً منيرا على حوض الما واقف
وكلمن ياخذ من ذلك الما الذي هو ما الحياة يعطيه ذلك
الانسان المنير تفاحة اعطاني انا المسكين تفاحتين
ومن بعد هذا اعطاهم السلام. فنظرتٍ الاربعة وعشرون
قسيس يسبحوا من بعد التسريح قايلين الليلوا سبحوا
وباركوا الرب الاهنا. سبحوه بتسبيحا جديدا لان بركته
وسلامته في كنايس قديسية الليلويا. وبعد ذلك حملوا
اواني المذبح ورفعوهم واذ خرج ذلك الانسان
المنير الذي كان معي اولاٍ في المذبح. ومسك بيدي واخرجني
من الكنيسة ورجع بي الى العالم دفعة اخرى وفيما انا خارج
من باب البيعة نظرت سطرين مكتوبين في طريق
كنيسة الابكار منجلكم ايها القسوس القايمين في مذبح
الرب الواحد منهم يصرخ قايلاً بصوت عظيم في كل وقت
طوبا كم ايها القسوس وكل اولاد الكنيسة الذين اوتمنوا

Page 8

[to] the place of the water, and I saw an illuminated man on the shoreline of the water, standing.
And everyone receiving from that water—which is the water of life—is granted an apple
by that illuminated man, who gave wretched me two apples!
(IV.17) After this, he passed peace to them and I observed the twenty-four
priests giving praise after the dismissal, saying "Alleluiah! Praise
and bless the Lord our God! Praise Him with new praise, for His blessing
and His peace is in the holy churches! Alleluiah!" **(IV.18)** After that they carried
the vessels of the altar, raised them up, and then that illuminated man,
who was with me initially, emerged at the altar. **(V.1)** And he grasped my hand and
drew me out of the church, and brought me back to the world in another instant. **(V.2)** And while I was departing
from the door of the church I observed two lines of text in the way
of the Church of the Virgin, on behalf of you, O priests standing at the altar
of the Lord. **(V.3)** One of them proclaims, saying in a great voice at all times:
"Holy are you, O priests, and all the sons of the church who are entrusted

Page 9

على مذبح الرب. وكملوا خدمتهم جيداً بكل ظهارة وكل
بر كما اعطا لهم الناموس لان عظيمة هي الكرامات التي
عطيت لهم في السماوات. ياخذوها من الرب وملاك الرب
يفرح معهم في كنيسة الابكار والاخر يصرخ قايلاً الويل
لكم ايها القسوس واولآد الكنيسة الذين اوتمنوهم على مذبح
الرب ولم يكملوا خدمتهم حسنا بالطهارة والبر وهو
ان اعمالكم هذه لكم لتجازوا[30] عليها من قبل الاله الذي لا
يحابي ولا ياخذ بالوجوه. ومن بعد هذا اتا ذلك الانسان
المنير الى الموضع الذي فيه السلم. ونزل بي الى اسفل على
الدرج. وعندما نزلت على الارض رفعوا السلم الى السما.
وكان مني عندما ذهبت الى الموضع وحدي انا وويصا
تلميذي فاخرجت واحد من اوليك التفاح دفعتها
له وقلت له خذ هذه البركة يا ابني من الذي لي فا أما[31] هو
نخر ساجدا امامي قايلاً يا ابي القديس ان بصلاواتك

30 Cf. parallel in MS 166, f. 226v, line 7, which reads: لتتجاوزوا عليها.
31 Sic.

Page 9

with the altar of the Lord. They completed their service well, with all purity and all
reverence in accordance with the law given to them, for great is the dignities that
were given to them in the heavens. They will receive them from the Lord. And the angels of the Lord
will rejoice with them in the Church of the Virgin."[32] **(V.4)** And the other proclaims, saying, "Woe
to you, O priests and sons of the church, who were entrusted with the altar
of the Lord and did not complete your service well with purity and reverence. Such are
your works, these by which you might be approved before the God who is
impartial and does not respect persons." **(VI.1)** After this, that illuminated man came
to the place wherein was the staircase. He brought me down to the bottom on
the steps, **(VI.2)** and when I stepped down on the earth the stairs were raised up to heaven.
(VI.3) And it so happened to me[33] when I went to the place where I was, I with Besa
my disciple, I pulled out one of those apples, handed it over
to him, and said to him, "Take this blessing, my son, from what I have!" **(VI.4)** Then he
fell prostrating before me saying, "O my holy father, by your holy

32 Grohmann's edition adds: "which is in heaven," الذي في السمآء.

33 See II.1 for same grammatical form.

Page 10

المقدسة صنعت معي رحمة بتفاحة اخذتها من الانسان
المنير الذي واقف على الحوض. ثم قدمها واوراها لي اما
انا فقلت له كيف وجدت هذا يا ابني واعلمني بالذي كان
منك. اما هو فخاف ان يقول لي الرويا. فقلت له يا ابني لا
تخفي نعمة الله لكن قول الحق الذي ينبع من فيك كل حين.
فاجاب وقال لي يا ابي القديس كان مني في الوقت الذي
صعدت فيه على السلم وصرت انا غيرنا ظر اليك في
الجو ولم يرفعوا[34] السلم من مكانه الى السما فقلت انا في
فكري لماذا انا جالس هكذا والسلم ثابت على حاله
اقوم واصعد الى فوق الى الموضع الذي حمل اليه ابي
فقمت وتبعت اثرك ولم اعلم اين امضى ومشيت
ودخلت من الباب وتطلعت فنظرت رهبان
فتبعتهم. واتيت الى كنيسة عظيمة حسنة جداً
في مجدها ونورها وكنت واقف اشاهد عظم ذلك

34 Scribe scores three slash lines through يعرفوا, and in the margin writes يرفعوا.

Page 10

prayers you generated mercy for me through the apple you received from the illuminated
man who stood upon the shoreline." **(VI.5)** Then he presented it and showed it to me. **(VI.6)** As for
me, I said to him, "How did you find this, my son?" He informed me of what
happened to him. **(VI.7)** As for him, he was afraid to tell me the vision. **(VI.8)** I said to him, "My son, do not
conceal the grace of God, but speak the truth which always springs forth from within you."
(VII.1) He answered and said to me, "My holy father: it happened to me at the time when
you ascended upon the staircase; I began without seeing you in
the air and the staircase was not raised from its place to the heaven. **(VII.2)** I said in
my thought, 'Why am I sitting like this while the staircase is fixed in its position?
I will arise and climb to the top to the place where my father was transported.'
(VII.3) So I arose and followed immediately after you and did not know where I would end up; **(VII.4)** I walked
and entered the door and I ascended and observed monks,
and I followed them. **(VII.5)** I went to a grand church, very lovely in
its glory and light, and I was standing, witnessing the greatness of that

Page 11

المجد المحيط بتلك الكنيسة وكثرة الجموع التي اتيت
اليها حتى اني كنت افكر ان قلبي وفكري وعقلي تغير.
وصرت مثل واحد كاين[35] في حكم.[36] ثم تطلعت عن
يميني. فنظرت انسان منير واقف في جانبه البيعة
فقال لي حسنا اتيت يا اخي الى هذا الموضع لقد
استحقيت نعمة عظيمة وبركة كبيرة لان الرب دعانا مع
جميع قديسيه الى هذا المكان. وهوذا اتا الينا ابينا شنوده
وهو داخل في هذا الموضع الذي هو قدس القديسين. واني
قلت له لمن هذا[37] الكنيسة العجيبة وهذا المجد العظيمة
محيط بها. اما هو فقال لي ما اتيت الى هذا الموضع الاء
اليوم. فقلت له نعم فقال لي هذه كنيسة الابكار وهذا
هو يوم تكريزها الذي هو الرابع عشر من شهر ابيب
ما تنظر القدسين[38] كلهم مجتمعين في تجددها. فقلت له
الذين رقدوا ومضوا الى الرب هم الذين اتوا الى هذا

35 Read, كائن ; ordinarily this ms reduces ئ to ي.
36 Sic. Scribal error; read, حلم. V. parallel in MS 166, f. 227v, line 4: حلم.
37 Sic.
38 Sic.

Page 11

glory surrounding that church, and the many throngs that came
to it, until I was thinking that my heart and my thinking and my mind are changing.
I became like someone existing in a dream. **(VII.6)** Then I looked to
my right and I saw an illuminated man standing beside the church.
(VII.7) He spoke splendidly to me: 'Come, my brother, to this place, for
you have been worthy of great grace and a large blessing, because the Lord summoned us with
all of His saints to this place.' And none other than our Father Shenouda came to us,[39]
and he was entering this place which is the Holy of Holies. **(VII.8)** And I
said to him [the illuminated man], 'Whose is this wonderful church and this great glory
surrounding it?' **(VII.9)** As for him, he said to me, 'Did you come to this place only
today?' **(VII.10)** I said to him, 'Yes.' **(VII.11)** He said to me, 'This is the Church of the Virgin and this is the day of its consecration, which is the fourteenth of the month Abib.
(VII.12) Do you see the Saints, all of them, gathered in its renewal?' **(VII.13)** I said to him,
'Those who fell asleep and proceeded to the Lord, are those the ones who came to this

39 Grohmann's text, British Museum Add. 22691, presents a more concise phrase: "And there was Anba Shenouda entering this church." وهو ذا ابي شنوده داخل هذا الموضع.

Page 12

الموضع اليوم. فاجاب وقال لي هولاي الاربعة وعشرون
قسيس والانبيا والرسل والبطاركة والاساقفة والقمامصة
والقسوس والشماسة والابود ياقونين والاغنسطسين والشهدا
والرهبان والعلمانين وكل المومنين الذين يصنعون ارادة
الرب على الارض الاحيا منهم والاموات يجتمعوا الى
هذا الموضع المقدس اليوم. واما انا فصرت داهشاً ولم اعرف
احداً من ذلك الجمع العظيم ومن شدة الخوف الذي حصل لي.
ثم اخذت من السراير المقدسة جسد ودم ربنا يسوع المسيح
واتيت الى الحوض واخذت المآ وارا ذلك الانسان المنير
اعطاني هذه التفاحة. ولما اخذت التسريح لم انظر ذلك
الانسان المنير. ثم نزلت قبلك يا ابي القديس. وهودا
الذي كان مني اعلمتك به وانا شنوده. قلت له من الذي
سبق ورتل فقال لي داوود. فقلت له ايضا من الذي قرى
الفصول. فاجاب وقال لي بولص الرسول قرا البولص ويوحنا
البتول قرا القتاليقون. ولوقا الانجيلي قرا الا بركسيس.

Page 12

place today?' **(VII.14)** He answered and said to me, 'Those twenty-four
priests, and the prophets, and the apostles, and the patriarchs, and the bishops, and the hegumens,
and the priests, and the deacons, and the subdeacons and readers,[40] and the martyrs,
and the monks, and the scholars, and all the believers who undertook the will
of the Lord on earth—those living among them as well as the dead gathering to
this holy location today.' As for me, I became amazed having not known
any one from that great group, and from the intensity of fear that overcame me.
(VII.15) Then I received from the holy sacraments, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and then I went to the shore and took water, and seeing that illuminated man
who gave me this apple. **(VII.16)** And when I began to leave I did not see that
illuminated man. **(VII.17)** Then I came down prior to you, my holy father.
(VII.18) And this—about which
I have just informed you—is what happened to me." **(VII.19)** And I, Shenouda, said to him, "Who
led and sang?" **(VII.20)** He said to me, "David!" **(VII.21)** I also said to him, "Who read
the chapters?" **(VII.22)** He replied and said to me, "Paul the Apostle read Paul, and John
the pious read the *Catholic* [Epistles], and Luke the Evangelist read *Acts*,[41]

40 See page 7 (above) in this manuscript.

41 Transliterations into Arabic of the Greek terms: *al-qatālīqūn* and *al-abraksīs* < Καθολικῶν and Πράξις. Here the straight brackets indicate supplemental wording for clarity.

Page 13

وداوود قرى المزمور. ومتى البشير قرا الانجيل. وبطرس
راس الرسل خدم القداس المقدس واستافانوس[42] رئيس
الشماسة خدم معه شماساً والرب يسوع المسيح هو الذي
بارك الرسل البطاركة والاساقفة والقسوس.
وبطرس ايضا مع الرسل اعطوا البركة لبقية الشعب.
وانا ايضا اسرعت ونزلت[43] والذي سمعتهم ونظرتهم
اشرحتهم لقدسك يا ابي القديس انبا شنوده. وانا المسكين
لما سمعت هولاي من ويصا تلميذي علمت ان روح الله
استراح عليه. فجدت ربنا والاهنا الذي يطلب كل
حين خلاص الناس جميعهم. ولا يريد احدا يهلك.
والان يا اخوتي الاحبا القسوس وساير نغمات[44]
الكنيسة المقدسة الذي ابتاعهم السيد المسيح بدمه
الالهي. والان فارجعوا وتوبوا في هذه الدنيا قبل
ان تموتوا ويفرغ زمانكم. ويذبل العشب وينتزر[45] زهره

42 The point on either the ف or ن is not clearly visible.
43 ا crossed out by scribe: لـنزلت.
44 Sic. Scribal error. Read طغمات, per MS 166, f. 229r, line 4.
45 Sic. Grohmann's ms reads ينتثر ("disperse"); is this a phonetic shift?

Page 13

and David read the Psalm, and Matthew the Evangelist read the Gospel, and Peter
the head of the Apostles served the holy mass, and Stephen the arch-
deacon served with him as a deacon, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the One who
blessed the apostles, the patriarchs, the bishops, and the priests.
And Peter also, along with the apostles, gave the blessing to the rest of the people.
(VII.23) And I also made haste and descended; and what I heard and observed
I explained to your holiness, O my father, St. Anba Shenouda." **(VII.24)** And I the wretch,
when I heard those things from Besa my disciple, I knew that the Spirit of God
rested upon him.[46] **(VII.25)** So I glorified our Lord and God who at all times
seeks the salvation of men in their entirety and does not want one to be destroyed.
(VIII.1) And now, my beloved brethren, the priests and the other ranks[47]
of the holy Church whom the Lord Christ purchased with His divine
blood: **(VIII.2)** Now: turn back and repent in this world, before
you die and your time is used up! And "the grass withers and its fluorescence diminishes,"[48]

46 Somewhat of a pun, coming from the root of *rwḥ*, perhaps can be construed as "inspiration." Here this manuscript is probably more advanced than that of Grohmann, which employs the phrase حال فيه.

47 Scribal error: the word نغمات ("melodies") should be read طغمات ("ranks").

48 Isaiah 40:7.

Page 14

ويحملوك ايها الانسان الى كوره بعيده. ليس تعرفها
ويقيموك امام الرب وتاتي اعمالك التي صنعتهم يقفوا
امامك. وياتي ملاك المذبح الذي كنت تخدمه. وهو باكي
العين من اجلك لينظر الذي يكون منك الويل لك
ايها الشقي الضعيف في الوقت الذي يعروك فيه. في
وسط الملايكة ليحكموا عليك كاعمالك الشريرة الذي[49]
صنعتهم. ويعذبوك المعذبين بغير رحمة. لكن اعلمك
ايها الانسان الخاطي اذا كانت مملكت هذا العالم التي
تزول كمثل الظل الذي يتغير كما هو مكتوب ان العالم
يزول وكل شهواته والذي يصنع ارادة الرب يدوم الى الابد.
فاذا اخطا انسان وتاب توبة نقسية مستقيمة صحيحة
من كل القلب فيقبله ربنا يسوع المسيح قدم قربان
كحسب طاقتك. وما هو القربان الذي تقدمه صوم
طاهر من كل ريا[50] ومن كل حسد ومن كل نميمة هذا الذي

49 Sic. Read as التي.

50 Read as رئاء. The manuscript commonly substitutes the ي for the ئ. See note on manuscript page 5.

Page 14

and "they will carry you to a distant district that you don't know."[51]
And they will raise you up before the Lord and present your deeds which you committed while standing before you. Then the angel of the altar which you had been serving will come with tearful
eye on account of you, in order to observe what will happen to you. **(VIII.3)** Woe to you,
O weak wretch, at the time when they dishonor you in
the midst of the angels, to pronounce judgment upon you according to your evil deeds that
you committed. **(VIII.4)** And they will afflict you with tortures mercilessly. **(VIII.5)** But I inform you,
O sinful man: behold the power of this world which
vanishes is like the shadow that changes, **(VIII.6)** as it is written: "the world
will vanish with all its lusts; and whoever undertakes the will of the Lord will endure unto the end."[52]
(VIII.7) If a man sins and repents a pure orthodox true penance
whole heartedly, our Lord Jesus Christ will receive him. **(VIII.8)** Present Qurbān [offering][53]
according to the measure of your ability. **(VIII.9)** And what is this Qurbān that you present? **(VIII.10)** Pure
fasting from all hypocrisy, and all jealousy, and all slander: this is what

51 John 21:18. In this section Grohmann's manuscript is more complete than this one.
52 1John 2:17.
53 Arabic, *qurbān*—referring often to the Mass itself, or the Eucharist.

Page 15

يقبله الرب منك. ايها الانسان الخاطي الغريب
غريباً تاخذه الى منزلك وتطعمه خبزاً جسد عريان
تستره بثوب قربان تعطيه لبيعة الله كنيسة تبنيها
اوكتاب قراه اوانجيل اوتكتب اتعاب الشهدا وجهاد
السواح هو لاي يقبلهم منك ويكتب اسمك في سفر الحياة
في كنيسة الابكار الذي في السموات فان ذلك الشهيد
اوالقديس يطلب الى الرب يسوع المسيح عنك فيغفر لك
خطاياك انسان ضعيف اوانسان مسكين اومحبوس
في السجون تصنع معهم رحمه في يوم تذكار القديسين
تجدهم قربان طاهر قدامك امام الرب الاله. وفيما انا
المسكين شنوده اقرا في هذا المكتوب في كنيسة الابكار
نظرت موضع مكتوب فيه فوق من هولاي من اجل الذي
يحل الصوم قبل ان ياتي الوقت. وفي ذلك الوقت
الذي قريته فيه خافت نفسي جداً لاني انا ايضا

Page 15

the Lord receives from you. O estranged, strangely sinful
man: receive Him into your abode and consume Him as bread. A naked body is
concealed by the garment of Qurban[54] that you give to the church of God, a church that He adopted,
or a book that is read, or a Gospel, or the trials of the martyrs are written, and the strivings
of the anchorites: those are what He will receive from you, and He will write your name in the Book of Life
in the Church of the Virgin, which is in heaven. **(VIII.11)** For if that martyr
or saint petitions to the Lord Jesus Christ on your behalf, He will forgive you
your sins. A weak man or a wretched man or the captive
in prisons: produce with them mercy on the day of remembering the saints.[55]
You will find them a pure Qurban[56] before you, before the Lord God. **(IX.1)** And as for me,
the wretch Shenouda, I am reading in[57] this inscription in the Church of the Virgin:
I noticed a place in which was written above these things, on account of the one who
ends the fast[58] before the [proper] time comes. **(IX.2)** And that time
in which I read it, my soul was greatly afraid because I, too,

54 See note on *qurbān*, manuscript page 14, above.
55 The syntax in this sentence seems more reliant on a Coptic style than Syriac.
56 See note on *qurbān*, manuscript page 14, above.
57 Sic.
58 The compounded relative clause is an exemplar of Coptic style.

Page 16

المسكين شنوده خليت يوماً واحداً في الاربعين
المقدسة التي لربنا يسوع المسيح. لكن ايضا لما قريت الكلام
الذي يقول فيه كلمن يحل الصوم تكون عقوبته عظيمة
منجل هذا انا خايف ليلا يعذبوني اربعين يوماً منجل ذلك
اليوم الواحد لاجل الذي رايته بعيني تعال الان لتسمع
ما الذي يحل بالذي ياكل في الصوم قبل الوقت عظيم هو
الم القلب بتلك النفس لان في ذلك الوقت يعلقوا
السنتهم ليطرحوها في مجاري الميا . ليشربوا فيسرعوا
اوليك الاعوان ويعذبوهم ولا يدعهم يشربوا ما بالجملة
ويقولوا لهم كيف حتى لم تصبروا هذه الساعة الواحدة
ولا تحلوا صوم الرب. منجل شركم هودا نطرحكم الى النار
في هذا الموضع عوض الزمان القليل الذي خالفتم فيه
منجل شهوات قلوبكم. خذوا لكم الان هذا العذاب عوض
الخطية التي صنعتوها. هودا الذي رايته بعيني كتبته

Page 16

the wretch, withdrew one day in the holy
forty [fast] which belong to our Lord Jesus Christ. **(IX.3)** But also, when I read the words
in which it says, "Whoever ends the fast—his punishment will be great,"
(IX.4) on account of this I am afraid; may I not be tormented forty days on account of
that one day. **(IX.5)** For the sake of what I saw with my eyes: come now to hear
what will happen to someone who eats during the fast before the [proper] time.[59] **(X.1)** Great is
the pain of the heart in that soul because in that time they will begin—
their tongue—to throw them in the stream of water in order to drink. **(X.2)** Those [heavenly] assistants
will make haste and make them suffer, and not let them drink water at all;
and they will say to them, "Why—when you did not patiently bear this one hour,
nor did you uphold the fast of the Lord? On account of your evil, **(X.3)** thus we will throw you into the fire
in this place, in exchange for the little time in which you diverged
on account of the lusts of your hearts. **(X.4)** Receive for yourselves now this suffering in exchange
for the sin that you committed." **(X.5)** It is this that I saw with my eyes, which I wrote

59 The text's use of the bare form of الوقت ("time") may indicate the Greco-Coptic *Vorlage*: *kairos*.

Page 17

لكم ايها الشعب المحب للمسيح. فالان ياولادي الاحبا
احفظوا الصوم بالطهر والعفة. واحفطوا ذاتكم من شرة
هذا العالم لان خيراته فانية زايلة. فاما تلك الخيرات
التي للملكوت السمايية فانها دايمة ابدية وايضا انه ينبغي
ان نبكي على الذين يموتون في خطاياهم قبل ان يتوبوا
لاني سمعت الانفس التي على مجاري المياة يبكوا على
انفسهم وحدهم فانهم اشقيا[60] معذبين جداً منجل اوليك
الملايكة القليلي الرحمة الموكلين بهم لان اوليك كانوا
يصرخوا ارحموا قليلاً. فيجيبوا الملايكة قايلين لهم
ليس هاهنا موضع توبة. فيقوموا ليشربوا قليل ما فلا يدعوهم
الموكلين بهم ويتعبوهم جداً منجل الشرور والنجاسات
التي صنعوها في العالم. تعالوا الان ايها الرجال
والنسوان الذين ولدوا الاولاد في هذا العالم بالفرح.
انظروهم في الجحيم كيف هم رقود. باي نوع واي موضع

60 End of Grohmann's edition of British Museum Add. 22691.

Page 17

for you, O people who love Christ.[61] **(x.6)** And now, my beloved sons,
keep the fast with purity and integrity. And protect yourself from the evil
of this world because its treasures are temporary, transitory. As for those treasures
which belong to the Kingdom of Heaven, they are enduring, eternal. **(x.7)** Also, it is necessary
for us to weep over those who are dying in their sins before they repent,
because I heard the souls that are on the current of water crying over
their souls alone, for they are wretched, [*end of* **Brit.Mus.Add.22691**] suffering greatly on account of those
angels of little mercy who are in charge of them, because those ones were
crying out, "Have a little mercy!" **(x.8)**[62] And the angels will answer, telling them,
"There is no opportunity here for repentance!" And they arise to drink a little water, but those in
charge will not allow them, and they will trouble them greatly on account of the evils and impurities
that they produced in the world. **(xi.1)** Come now, O men
and women who bore children in this world joyfully:
Observe them in hell! How are they sleeping? In what form, and what condition

61 Here Grohmann fills a lacuna in British Museum Add. 22691 with the Arabic word المؤمنون.

62 The present edition shall continue the practice, introduced by Grohmann, of segmenting the text into thought units (see footnote on page 1 of this ms). The following text segments follow the logic of the scribe's punctuation (merely the dot frequently appearing in red ink) and the break in syntactic units.

Page 18

هو مسكنهم واي مضجع هم نيام فيه مضاجع دنسة
جداً بالحقيقة ياخوتي انه يبكي عليهم هولاي الذين
يموتوا في نصف ايامهم. وقال ايضا لست اعلم من اخذهم
ومن هو الذي جمعهم او من هو الذي يسود عليهم ايها
الموت المر وامواجك الشريرة بكل نوع هودا مرقدك
قد اعددته وليس من يرقد عليه كما هو مكتوت في اشعيا
النبي قايلين نوحوا وابكوا يا قبايل الارض كلها لانه
فرغ نعيمكم وفرحكم اين هو سروركم الذي كان اولا هودا
قد ماتوا ابناتكم الذين ولدوتهم قد سلط عليهم الموت
تعالوا الان ايها الذين يزينوا اولادهم في ايام الاعياد
هودا قد فرغ ايام فرحكم وصار ايام حزنكم وقال سليمان
الكايسي في نشيد الانشاد اعلمني اي مسكن[63]
اقمت فيه وفي اي مواضع انضجعت لكن هذا طريق
الذي مات ورقد في الارض اين الان الخرق[64] الرفيعة

63 At the end of this line of text, اسكن is crossed out with double strokes.
64 MS 166 reads الثياب الرفيعة: "clothes" or "garments." See f. 232r, line 5.

Page 18

is their dwelling? In what bed are they sleeping? Very polluted
beds!" **(XI.2)** Truly my brothers, he [Shenoute] is weeping over them, those who
are dying in the midst of their days. **(XI.3)** He also said, "I do not know who took them
or who it is that gathered them, or who it is that prevailed over them. O
death spreading your evil waves of every sort, that is your bed:
you had prepared it and no one is sleeping on it, as it is written in Isaiah
the Prophet, saying, 'Lament and weep, O tribes of the earth
your comfort and joy has ended; where is your gaiety that had been the case initially?'[65] That is:
your children that you bore already died; death already ruled over them.
(XI.4) Come now, O those who adorn their boys in the days of their festivals:
That is: the days of your joy already ended and the days of your sadness commenced. **(XII.1)** Solomon the Ecclesiastic said in the Song of Songs, 'Inform me: any dwelling,
did I reside in it, and any locations, I laid in them.'[66] But this is a way
which he died and lay down on the earth. Where now are the exquisite cloths

65 See Isaiah 24:1–11.
66 I have not identified this quote.

Page 19

الذي كنت فيها تلذذ. وهو الان انت راقد تحت
اطباق الثرا. اين الان الفروش والبرفير التي كانت مفروشة
تحتك. وهودا انت مدحرج بالم قلب في الارض. اين الان
العسولات والتحسينات التي كنت تصنعهم لجسدك. وهودا
جسدك الشقي المسكين ليس انسان يقدر يشم رايحته
بالجملة ايها الانسان. اين هي عضاك الذي كنت تربيهم
وهودا تنظرهم قد فسدوا في الارض. اين الان تلك العينين
الذي كانوا يطلعوا للباطل والشرور وهودا الان
لم تبصر بهم شي وقد اضمحلوا في الارض. اين تلك اليدين
التي صنعوا اعمالا كثيرة يشيطاينه هودا هم مطروحين
في جانبك لا يتحركوا بالجملة اذا وضعوك في قبر وصوت
كمثل الخشبة اليابسة. بالحقيقة انك صوت كمثل
من لم يكن. والان اليوم كمثل امثال سليمان[67]
اكلنايدي[68] القايلة اباطيل في اباطيل وكل شي هو في العالم

67 A scribe emends an initial aleph with double strikethrough اسليمان.
68 Sic. Read, الكئاسي.

Page 19

in which he was delighted? **(XII.2)** And now it is you who is sleeping under
layers of earth.[69] Where, now, is the mattress and the purple that was a bed
beneath you? Why, that is you who is curled up in heartache in the earth.
Where, now,
are the sweets and beautifications which you had produced for your body?
Why, that is
your wretched damned body that no human is able to smell its odor,
no human at all! Where are your limbs that you had conditioned?
Why, they are what you see being rotted in the earth! Where, now, are those
two eyes
that were laid upon vanity and evils? Why, now by
them nothing is seen, and they have vanished into the earth. Where are those
two hands
that produced many works, doing so devilishly? Why, they are cast down
beside you, not at all active when they put you in a grave, and a sound
like dried wood—truly—you are a voice like
someone who has not existed. **(XII.3)** And now, today, like the Proverbs of
Solomon
the Ecclesiastic, the one saying: 'Vanity unto vanities,' and everything in the
world

69 Perhaps a pun, since the word الثرا (sic), *al-tharā/tharī*, can mean both soil and wealth. Cf. MS 166, f. 232v, line 7, which reads اطباق الارض.

Page 20

يزول ويبطل ووجدت مكتوب في كنيسة الابكار ان
يوما في بيت الرب اخير من الف سنة في العالم. والان
يا احباي الارتدكسين بادروا واجتهدوا في خلاص
نفوسكم. واوظبوا[70] الطهارة والمحبة التامة لبعضكم
بعض بالصوم الطاهر النقي من الشبهات العالمية
كما قال بولص الرسول اسعوا في اثر الصلح و[71] الود
واوظبوا على الطهارة الذي لا يعاين الملكوت بقيرها.[72]
وتبدل المحبة لكل احدا كما قال ايضا النبي لو نقلت
الجبال وابدلت كل ما لي للمحتاجين ولو القيت للسباع
وليس في حب كنت كالصنج الذي يظن[73] والنحاس
الذي يصوت. فلسارع يااحباي الى سماع المقولات
ونعمل بما يتلا علينا من الموضوعات لكي ربنا يسوع المسيح
يعطينا نصيباً صالحاً وحصاً[74] ناجحاً مع صفوف
قديسيه في كنيسة الابكار التي في السموات. لنقتني

70 An uncommon instance of the pointed ظ, in service of a rarer verb.
71 Superfluous و crossed out with an x.
72 Significantly different to the parallel in St. Shenouda Society MS 166, f. 233r, line 3.
73 Sic. Hypercorrection? Read, يطن.
74 Perhaps written حضاً; hypercorrection?

Page 20

passes away and 'is in vain.'[75] **(XII.4)** And you find it written in the Church of the Virgin
today, in the house of the Lord, during the last thousand years of the world. And now,
my beloved Orthodox ones: make haste and strive for the salvation of
your souls. Persist in holiness and perfect love to one
another with chaste fasting, pure from worldly lusts,
as Paul the Apostle said, 'Strive immediately after peace and affection,
and persist in the holiness'[76] that the kingdoms do not support in their lowliness.
(XII.5) And deal out love to everyone, just as the Prophet also said, 'If I move
the mountains'[77] and 'transfer all I own' to 'the needy,'[78] and if I am cast to the predators,[79]
and there 'is not love in me' then 'I am like the cymbal that rings and the brass
that sounds.'[80] **(XII.6)** So, may you 'be quick,' my beloved, 'to listen'[81] to the sayings
and do what has been recited to us on the matters, so that our Lord Jesus Christ
will give us a favourable share, a suitable portion with the ranks
of His saints in the Church of the Virgin that is in heaven; that we may obtain

75 Ecclesiastes 1:2.
76 See 2 Timothy 2:22 and Hebrews 12:14.
77 1 Corinthians 13:2.
78 1 Corinthians 13:3.
79 1 Corinthians 15:32.
80 1 Corinthians 13:1.
81 James 1:19.

Page 21

لنا ايها الاحبا ملكوت الله من قبل الامانة الارتدكسية.
فهذه الحياة الطوبانية التي امر بها ربنا يسوع المسيح وكافة
رسله المشتملين بالاعمال المرضية. وهودا الان يا احباي
قد اعلمتكم كل شي رايت في الكنيسة المقدسة الذي هي
بيعة الابكار. ومنجل الذين يصنعون الخيرات ومنجل
العداب الذي اعد للخطاه الغا فلين عن التوبة وايضا
ياولادي فلينادي كلامنا على خلاص نفسه ونبعد من
الشر ونصنع الخيرات كي اذا خرجنا من العالم الباطل
نجد رحمه في المنبر المخوف الذي لربنا يسوع المسيح الذي
اياه نسال بشفاعة والدته القديسة الطاهرة مرتمريم
العذرى كل حين والشاهد الكريم ماري مرقص الانجيلي
الرسول والقديس العظيم والنبي الكريم انبا شنوده رئيس
المتوحدين ان يغفر خطايانا ويسامحنا بهفواتنا ويضح
عن نزلاتنا وتمنحنا ارث الملكوت الابدية والنعم الصرمدية[82]

82 Sic. Read as السرمدية.

Page 21

for us—any of the beloved—the Kingdom of God on account of the orthodox faith.
(XIII.1) For this blessed life that our Lord Jesus Christ commanded, and the rest of His apostles,
included pleasing acts. And it is these, now, my beloved:
I have informed you of everything I saw in the holy church, namely
the Church of the Virgin, with regard to those producing good deeds, and with regard
to the torment that was prepared for the sinners neglecting repentance."
(XIII.2) And also,
my children, let our speech be proclaimed for the salvation of his soul, and we shall keep away from
evil and produce good deeds so that, when we depart from the vain world,
we will find mercy at the "fearful rostrum"[83] of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom
we beseech through the intercession of His Pure Holy Mother Saint Mary
the ever-Virgin, and the beneficent martyr Saint Mark the Evangelist
Apostle, and the great Saint and beneficent Prophet Anba Shenouda, Archimandrite,
that He [the Lord] forgive our sins and pardon our offenses, and purify
our failings and confer upon us the inheritance of the eternal kingdom and eternal grace

83 Romans 5:10, the βῆμα. Cf. this manuscript, p. 3, line 10.

Page 22

والخلود في منازل الا برار وكنيسة الابكار[84] الذي راها
هذا القديس العظيم. ويجعلنا مستحقين سماع اقواله
المقدسة الناطق بها في بيعته الواحدة الجامعة الرسولية
بشفاعة سيدتنا ذات الشفاعات معدن الطهر والجود
والبركات الست السيدة مرتمريم البتول. وجميع الشهدا
والقديسين. وكلمن ارضا الرب باعماله الصالحة اجمعين
الان وكل اوان والى داهر الداهرين. وابد الابدين امين.

تم كمل
ميمر القديس العظيم انبا شنوده
رئيس المتوحدين بسلام من
الرب ياخوة. امين.
امين.

كتبته بيدي والخط يشهد لي. ساتركه يوم.
وارتحلي. يا ساكن الدار لا تنسا الرحيل غدا. وكل ساكن.
دار سوف يرتحلي // افهم ايها القاري.

84 Note the stylistic rhyming in this phrase.

Page 22

and eternal life in houses of the pious, and the Church of the Virgin, which this
great Saint saw. **(XIII.3)** And make us worthy to hear his holy
sayings—the one who speaks them in His one, apostolic, catholic church
through the intercession of our Lady, the Mistress of intercessions, Trove of purity and generosity
and blessings—the Lady Virgin Saint Mary; and all the martyrs
and saints; and whoever pleases the Lord through his pious deeds: gathered
now, and unto all times, and unto ages of ages, and forever and ever. Amen.

Over and completed is
the treatise of the great Saint Anba Shenouda
the Archimandrite, with peace from
the Lord, O brothers. Amen.
Amen.

I wrote it with my hand and the handwriting bears witness to me. I shall leave it [i.e., the world] one day
and depart. O dweller of the house, do not forget about the departure tomorrow. And every dweller
of a house shall depart. // Understand [this], O reader.

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Index of Biblical and Qur'ānic Citations

Old Testament

Genesis

1:1 73
1:2 86
1:3 87
1:4 87
1:7 87
1:16 85
2:15 71
2:17 71, 85
2:24 71, 86
3:13 71
3:18 82
3:19 299
4:7 85
9:16 82
13:1 85
16:12 120
18:33 69, 85
19:1 69, 86
31:27 73

Exodus

1:15 85
1:22 82
3:4 69
7:11 71
9:13 71
28:30 73
28:42 73
44 74

Leviticus

18:12–13 73
24:11 71

Numbers

7:13–88 69

Deuteronomy

4:20 71
33:2 82

2 Kings

1:3 267

Job

3:3, 6, 11 298

Psalms

34:19 298
106:37–39 102

Proverbs

25:11 302
11:22 302

Isaiah

21:1 121n

Micah

7:6 132

New Testament

Matthew

5:1–12 138
7:6 404
10:35 132
11:20–30 37–54
12:30 144
13:24–30 122–123
16:13–20 142
16:17–19 142
16:19 148
18:18 148
19:28 144
20:26 144
21:1–8 126
24:43 120
25:31–46 145

Mark

9:35 144
9:47–48 296, 302

10:43–44 144
11:1–8 126

Luke
6:20–25 138
11:23 144
12:53 132
15:11–32 377
19:28–36 126
22:30 144

John
12:14–15 126
15:15 131
16:2 130
19:34 128

Acts
11:2–13:39 371

Romans
1:3 434
1:13 133
7:1 133
8:12 133
10:1 133

1 Corinthians
1:10–11 133
1:18 404
6:9 145
7:38 431, 435
7:39 432
10:21 267

2 Corinthians
6:15 267

Galatians
1:11 133
1:15 431, 435
1:18 436
4:28 436
5:21 145

Ephesians
1:3 432–433, 437
3:9 432–433, 437

Philippians
1:8 438
1:11 433

Colossians
1:19 431, 438

1 Thessalonians
2:12 439
2:14–16 102
5:1–3 120

2 Thessalonians
2:16 439

Titus
3:11 441

Philemon
9–10 441

Hebrews
5:7 430, 440
10:5 440

James
2:23 146

Qur'ān

1:6 102–103
1:7 103
2:61–62 270
2:62 4, 9, 11–12, 16
2:87 422–423
2:221 12
3:38–39 422
3:42–43 422
3:45 423
3:45–47 422
3:45–49 100
3:47 423
3:49 339
3:55–60 422

3:85 4, 11, 17
3:110–112 270
3:113 17
3:113–114 12
3:143 135
4:92 13
4:125 146
4:153 102
4:155 102
4:157 194, 198, 210, 417
4:157–158 127
4:171 101, 173
5:5 13–14
5:42 260
5:49 260
5:66 13, 18
5:73 10–11
5:75 135
5:77 4
5:82 13, 18, 277
5:110 100, 339
6:22–23 173
7:172 341
9:5 13
9:29 13, 269
16:103 93
17:81 198
17:88 93
17:111 173
22:17 13
22:40 12
49:14 102
108:1 105
108:3 105
111:4 106
112:4 162

Index of Names, Subjects, and Terms

ʿAbbāsid era 7, 132, 157, 210, 214–215, 234, 256–257, 261–264
ʿAbbāsid literature 104–105, 201, 277, 311, 326–328
ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl 67, 80
Abraham ben Maimon 60, 62, 79
Abraham, patriarch 69, 128, 143, 146, 186, 201, 298–299, 365, 366, 416
Abū al-ʿAtāhiya 327
Abū al-Majd ibn Abī Manṣūr ibn Abī al-Faraj al-Isrāʾīlī 79, 82, 84
Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī 3, 5, 6–18
Abū Ḥanīfa 175, 260, 271, 273, 276
Abū Miḥjan ibn Ḥabīb al-Thaqafī 327
Abū Nuwās 206, 207n, 208n, 211, 314, 326–328
Abū Qābūs 314
Abū Rāʾiṭa al-Tikrītī 157–176, 179–181, 184–186, 188, 190, 191, 415, 417, 424
Abū Saʿīd, the Samaritan 67, 80–81
Abū Tammām 311–319, 321–323, 325–328
Ḥamāsa of Abū Tammām 312, 322, 326
Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm 257, 258n, 259n, 271, 273, 276–277
adab 7, 322
Adam 71, 116, 128, 186, 195, 298, 299, 341, 360, 375, 422
ʿAdī ibn Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī 199
ahl al-dhimma 195, 210, 256, 258–260, 270, 279
ahl al-kitāb 173, 195
ajal 300, 301
Akhbār Abī Tammām 313, 325
ʿAlam al-Dīn Qayṣar 59
Alexander and the Hermit Prince 287–289, 292–296, 300–302, 304–307
Alexander Romance 365
Alexander the Great 287, 299, 303, 365
ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib 272n, 320
al-Amīn 328
ʿAmmār al-Baṣrī 179, 181, 182, 185, 186, 188, 191, 218–223, 225–226
analogy 12, 31, 169, 175, 176, 217, 218, 338
angels 69, 86, 87, 123, 137, 139, 147, 247, 261, 341, 344, 365, 417, 453, 455, 459, 463, 467, 477, 483
al-Anṣārī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī 284
Anselm 187, 189
Answers for the Shaykh 106, 395
anthropology 188
Antony the Great 360
apocalypse & apocalyptic 59n, 115–147, 149–151, 447
Apocalypse of Peter 447
Apocryphal literature 115, 116, 126, 127n, 138, 140–142, 150–151
apologetic 9n, 10, 16, 19, 28, 96, 97n, 101, 104, 107, 144, 157, 158, 176, 179, 180, 194, 195, 201, 205, 218, 286n, 303, 395–397
Aquila 83
Arabic Apocryphal Gospel of John 115–117, 119–151
Arabic Christianity 16, 19, and *passim*
Arabic personal names 39, 51, 318–321, 323, 325
Arabic poetry 7, 197, 203, 204n, 205, 206, 310–312, 314–316, 322, 326, 327, 335n
Aristotle 159–163, 165, 167, 168, 175, 176, 224, 225, 285–287, 362, 418
Aristotelianism in Arabic 158, 166, 184n–185n, 220, 221, 226, 256n, 423
Armenian 25, 340n, 361
ascetic, asceticism 104, 139n, 231n, 233, 238–240, 242, 243, 246, 247, 278, 294–296, 300–302, 323, 350n, 357, 360, 361, 365–367, 370, 373, 375, 378, 380, 381, 385, 390, 399, 402
al-Aʿshā 197, 198, 323, 330
al-Ashʿarī 167
Ashʿarism 14, 81n, 172n, 173n, 222, 338, 343
al-asmāʾ al-ḥusnā 286
Aṣmaʿiyyāt 312
Avicenna 340, 342n
Ayyūbid era 56–59, 61, 62, 336

baptism 122, 123, 209, 321, 406
Barsanuphius of Gaza 381
Basil of Caesarea (Basil the Great) 67, 80, 86, 165n, 167, 360, 371, 375, 397, 399–402, 404, 406, 408
basmala 290

Beelzebub 262, 267, 268
Beliar 262, 268
Besa, disciple of Shenoute 446n, 451, 453, 467, 475
Bible, Arabic translations of 23–35, 37–42, 44, 50–52, 59, 60–62, 64–77, 78–88, 426, 427n, 428–434
Biblical commentaries 59, 60, 67, 78–81, 88, 352–354, 428n, 430n
Bibliothèque nationale de France 62, 352, 355, 409, 410
bilingual manuscripts 321, 427, 429
biographical dictionaries 311, 313, 315, 321, 322, 323, 325, 326
blasphemy (*shatm*) 274, 275, 276, 339n, 403
Book of the Brahmans 365
al-Buḥturī 310, 312–313, 325, 327
  Ḥamāsa of al-Buḥturī 310
burial practices 402
Byzantine Church 38, 231, 235, 236, 237, 249, 250
Byzantine literature 98, 126n, 159, 231, 250, 400
Byzantium 125n, 127, 231, 233n, 234, 236, 239, 240, 243, 245n, 250, 337, 407

Cairo 33, 58, 62, 79, 209, 236, 256n, 350, 351, 352, 354, 355, 361, 407n, 410, 411, 412
canon law 58, 404
Canons of Clement 385
Canons of Saint Shenoute 386
Canons of Timothy I 260
catalogues 352, 353, 356, 357, 358, 360, 363, 364, 365, 388, 389, 408–412, 415
Catholic Church & Catholicism 22, 23, 26, 29, 32, 33, 143n, 493
Cheikho, Louis 9, 310, 311, 313–318, 320–323, 325–326, 335
  Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya 310–311, 314, 320, 322, 325
  Wuzarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyya baʿda l-Islām 311, 317–318, 320, 322, 325
Christian Arabic 35, 38, 51, 52, 95–97, 100–107, 115, 176, 310, 321, 349, 395, 396, 398, 399, 408, 412, 447
Christian-Muslim dialogue 5–8, 16, 97, 101, 179, 196, 201–202, 284, 303, 395, 396
Christian-Muslim polemic 13, 33, 95n, 98n, 100, 102, 104–107, 124, 137, 138, 140, 151, 194–195, 201, 205, 215, 217n, 221, 333, 337, 340, 402n, 417, 423
Christian-Muslim relations 7, 19, 33, 123, 140
  hybridity in 303
Christodoulos, St. 241–244, 249
Church of the East 5, 6, 9, 179, 202, 256, 260–265, 272
Clement of Alexandria 167n
Clement (of Rome?) 360, 385
Coenobion Monastery 360, 382
conversion 134, 248, 262, 263n, 264–267, 278, 316, 317, 325, 326, 329, 333, 407
Coptic 25, 56n, 57, 58, 60, 61, 78, 79, 81–84, 88, 289, 290, 293, 299, 301, 302, 303, 314, 321, 354, 356, 357, 358, 363, 400, 446, 447, 451
Coptic handwriting 364, 369, 370, 372, 374, 376, 378, 380, 383, 388
Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo 62, 350, 351n, 352, 354, 355, 361, 362
Coptic Renaissance 58, 81n
Copto-Arabic literature 59, 290, 293n, 305n, 355
Copts 59, 61, 78, 80, 84, 299n, 352, 403n
Covenant of ʿUmar (Pact of ʿUmar) 107, 195, 196n, 258n, 276n, 405
Cross 123, 124, 126–130, 194–211, 244, 317, 403–405, 416, 417, 421, 423, 451
cross-dressing 401
Cyril III ibn Laqlaq 57, 416

al-Dajjal 200
David ben Boaz 80
Dayr al-Suryān, see Monastery of the Syrians
Dayr Mār Mīnā, see Monastery of St. Menas
dhimmī 96n, 196n, 258–260, 264, 266, 267, 269–279, 405
dhimmī pacts 195, 210, 256, 258–260, 267, 270, 272–279, 405
Dhū Nuwās 314
al-Dimashqī, Ibn Abī Ṭālib 98n, 333
Diocletian 363
Divine attribute(s) 167–172, 175, 179, 225
diyya (blood money) 267n, 270, 272
Dorotheus of Gaza 379
doublet terms 44–45, 51

Eastern or "Oriental" paper 358, 364, 371, 374, 376, 388

ecclesiology 115, 121, 140–143, 151
Egypt 7, 15, 25, 26, 56–58, 60, 71, 78, 80, 234, 238, 239, 275, 289, 313, 318, 321, 328, 333, 336n, 349, 352, 353, 355n, 356, 396n, 400n, 410, 416n, 446n, 447
Elias of Nisibis 3–7, 8, 9, 11n, 12, 16, 18, 19, 223–225, 337n, 366
Ephrem the Syrian 86, 373, 381, 416
Era of the Martyrs 363
eschatology 126n, 132, 145, 200
Esdras, 1 & 2 365
Eucharist 145, 149, 150, 477n
Eulogius 351–354, 359–360, 366, 371, 373, 378, 386, 390
Eutychius of Alexandria 321
Evagrius Ponticus 349–351, 353–357, 359–363, 365–368, 371, 373, 375, 378, 379, 382–383, 386, 390
Gnostikos 354, 361
Kephalaia Gnostika 349, 350n, 351, 352, 354, 361, 362
Praktikos 351–352, 361
Evagrius, Bishop of Antioch 353

fasting 278, 290, 301, 344, 417, 457, 477, 489
foliation 364, 369, 372, 374, 376, 383, 388, 389
free will 85, 343n, 344

Gabriel III, patriarch of Alexandria 61
Gabriel, the Georgian Stylite 247–249
Garden of the Monks (*Busṭān al-ruhbān*) 360, 371
Genesis 27, 80–82, 84–86, 292, 299, 352
al-Ghazālī 342, 343
God's essence and attributes 159–176, 214–227, 303n
God's will 172n, 188, 421, 462–463
good and evil 337, 338, 339n
Gospel of Luke 377
Gospel of Matthew 140, 142
Gospels 23, 24, 27–33, 35, 37n, 38, 39, 59n, 84, 88, 116, 125, 135, 141, 207, 365, 426, 428n, 433n
Arabic printed Gospels 22–24, 27–33, 35
Greek language and texts 25–27, 29, 30, 32, 37–44, 47, 48, 51, 52, 65, 67, 69, 78, 83–84, 95, 118, 157, 159, 160, 179, 221, 236, 268, 296n, 343n, 349, 350n, 352, 353, 35, 361, 362n, 398, 400, 424, 426, 427, 429–433, 434–441, 451n, 455n, 463n, 473n
Greek philosophy and philosophers 99, 107, 159, 169, 286, 287, 362n
Gregory of Nazianzus 397, 399, 400
Gregory of Nyssa 163n, 171n, 343n, 344n, 371, 397

Ḥabbiba, metropolitan of Arsacia (Ray) 261
ḥadd / *ḥudūd* (punishments prescribed by the Qurʾān) 259, 267, 269n, 273, 274
Ḥadīth 83, 95, 198–200, 215, 270–273, 301, 322, 324, 326, 329–331, 335, 338n, 341–343
hagiography 139, 231, 232n, 237, 242n, 244n, 248, 250, 293n
al-Ḥākim 7, 209, 210n, 236, 237
al-Ḥakīm, Tawfīq 320
al-Ḥallāj 322
Ḥanafī jurisprudence 258n, 260, 271, 272, 273n, 275, 276
Ḥanbalī jurisprudence 272, 274, 275
Ḥanbalism 338, 343n
ḥanīf / *ḥunafāʾ* 286, 287, 401–406
al-Ḥārith ibn Sinān 67, 80
Harklean New Testament 430n, 433, 434
Hārūn al-Rashīd 206n, 234, 271, 314
hell and hellfire 48, 145, 172, 295, 296, 337, 341–343, 483
Hermes the Wise 378, 379, 420–422
hermits 205n, 243, 246–248, 250, 284, 287, 288n, 289, 292, 296, 300–302, 304
al-Ḥīra 314
Holy Land 231–240, 243–247, 249–251
homilies 80, 299n, 352, 378, 380, 416
homosexuality 401
honor 65, 136, 139, 140, 143, 147, 149, 173, 182, 184, 187, 189, 266, 275, 285, 404, 433n
hospitality 148, 234, 404, 405
Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq 256n, 284, 285n, 301
Ādāb al-falāsifa 284–289, 293, 295–297, 304–307
Fī l-aʿmār wa-l-ājāl 301
hybridity ("inter-confessional osmosis") 303

Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Namarī 258, 260, 266–267, 272, 275

Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa 62
Ibn al-ʿAsākir 313, 322
Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq 322
Ibn al-ʿAssāl, Amjad 58, 59, 61, 81
Ibn al-ʿAssāl, al-Asʿad Hibat Allāh 23, 59, 60, 83, 84, 88, 314
Ibn al-ʿAssāl, al-Kātib al-Miṣrī 58
Ibn al-ʿAssāl, al-Ṣafī 59, 60n
Ibn al-ʿAssāl, Muʾtaman al-Dawla Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm 59
Ibn al-Baqarī, Shākir ibn ʿAlam al-Dīn 318
Ibn al-Rāhib, Abū al-Shākir 59
Ibn al-Ṭayyib, Abū al-Faraj 67, 80, 88
Ibn al-Zunbūr, ʿAlam al-Dīn 317
Ibn Bahlūl, Ḥasan 321
Ibn Dāniyāl 320
Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad 169, 170, 260, 271, 273, 278n, 324, 341n
Ibn Kātib Qayṣar 59, 60
Ibn Khallikān 313, 315, 322
Wafayāt al-Aʿyān 322, 325n
Ibn Manẓūr 196, 197, 322, 324, 325
Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq 313n, 322, 323n, 324n
Ibn Qalāwūn, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad 317
Ibn Sīnā, see Avicenna
Ibn Surayj, Abū al-ʿAbbās 322
Ibn Taymiyya 4n, 98n, 333, 343n
idols and idolatry 73, 75, 120, 136–138, 145, 194–202, 210, 211, 402n
iḥsān 301
Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ 340
Incarnation 10, 61n, 158, 164, 179–192, 216, 222n, 336
incest 401
intermarriage 132
Isaac the Syrian 360, 375, 381
Isaac, patriarch 128, 143, 298, 299, 365, 366, 416
Isaiah of Scetis 360, 381, 385–387
al-Iṣfahānī, Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd 312
Kitāb al-Zahra 312, 319n, 322
Isḥāq ibn Ḥunayn 284n, 314, 344n
Islamic law 12, 58n, 96n, 134, 258n, 259, 260n, 266n, 267n, 270n–273n, 275n–277n, 405n

Jacob of Sarug 360, 365, 366, 370, 387
Jacob, metropolitan of Baṣra 261
Jacob, patriarch 73, 128, 143, 239, 298, 299, 366
Jacobites 11, 97n, 157, 179, 205n, 216, 417–419, 423, 424
Jaʿfar al-Barmakī 314
al-Jāḥiẓ, ʿAmr ibn Baḥr 256, 257, 259, 260, 268–270, 272–274, 276, 277–279
Jerusalem 10n, 25, 29, 80, 98, 100, 120, 123, 124, 126, 127, 129, 135, 138, 143, 150, 208, 209, 232, 233, 235n, 236–238, 241n, 242, 244, 246, 249, 396, 408, 409, 412, 415, 436
Jesus Christ 18, 40, 45, 51, 52, 53, 94n, 99–102, 116, 121, 124–128, 130–132, 134–136, 138–146, 151, 173, 194, 200, 214, 215, 340n, 360, 370, 375, 403n, 418, 419, 422, 423, 432, 437, 438, 441, 442, 451, 461, 463, 472–481, 488–491
Jewish-Christian relations 56, 59–62, 78, 79, 102, 121, 122, 129, 135, 143, 144
Jews 11–13, 16, 17, 56, 57, 58n, 60, 62, 65, 87, 99, 102, 103, 116n, 120–122, 127–129, 134, 135, 143, 144, 158, 159, 256n, 257, 277, 278, 334, 401–405, 407, 408, 416, 422
Jirjis ibn al-ʿAmīd ibn al-Makīn 59
Job 298
John Cassian 360, 378, 386
John Chrysostom 67, 80, 236, 360, 387, 408
John of Dalyatha, see John Saba
John of Damascus 95n, 100n, 160–164, 167, 168n, 171, 214, 318, 321, 343n, 344n, 416
John of the Thebaid 360, 381, 385
John Saba 351n, 360–362, 377, 378, 381
John the Little 117, 118, 379
Joseph, patriarch 73

Kaʿba 137, 138, 198, 316, 336
al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī 322
Taʾrīkh Baghdād 322
Kilij Arsalan 205
kingship 182, 293, 295, 296, 300, 306

Lazaros of Mount Galesion, St. 237–240, 243, 248
legal pluralism 96n
Lent 238, 290, 291, 303
Letter from Cyprus 333
Life of Evagrius 351, 355, 356n, 359, 365, 368
Life of St. Zosimus 365

Liturgy 149, 236, 239, 291
Lord's Prayer 352–354
Luqmān the Wise 299, 302, 303

al-Maʿarrī, Abū al-ʿAlāʾ 320
Risālat al-Ghufrān 320
Macarius the Great 360, 381, 384
al-Machriq / al-Mashriq 9, 310
al-Mahdī 157, 202, 203–204
Maimonides 60–62, 81n
Mālik ibn Anas 260, 275
Mālikī jurisprudence 260, 271n, 272, 275
al-Maʾmūn 9n, 10n, 93n, 97, 105, 157, 159, 203–204, 258n
manuscripts 6, 22n, 31n, 33, 37n, 39, 43, 61, 62, 63n, 79, 81, 82n, 83, 84, 94n, 95, 97n, 99, 106, 117n, 118, 119, 151, 284n, 289, 290n, 299n, 335, 336, 349, 350, 351n, 354–361, 363–364
Mār Sābā, see Monastery of St. Sabas
Marquṣ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭāʾī 320, 321
Mary, the Blessed Virgin 135, 183, 373, 416, 423
Mass 406, 446, 451, 457, 461, 475, 477n
Meletios the Younger, St. 243–245, 249
Melkites 11, 37, 39, 58, 65, 78, 79, 97, 98, 103, 157, 179, 208, 215, 216, 235–237, 250, 333, 336, 340n, 396, 400
miracles 52, 100, 122, 135, 139, 233n, 291, 334, 336, 337, 339, 340, 416, 418
Monastery of Naqlūn 381, 385
Monastery of St. Antony 352
Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai 233n, 353, 429n
see also Sinai
Monastery of St. Menas (*Dayr Mār Mīnā*) 351
Monastery of St. Sabas (*Mār Sābā*) 37, 52, 235n, 238, 239, 241, 318, 427n, 428
Monastery of St. Shenoute (the "White Monastery") 290
Monastery of the Syrians (*Dayr al-Suryān*) 349, 352, 355–357, 358n, 359, 360n, 362, 263, 365, 368, 370, 373, 375, 376, 378, 380, 385, 390
monasticism 208n, 231–235, 237, 241n, 242n, 245–248, 250, 358n
monotheism 3, 4, 6, 9–11, 14, 15, 18, 101, 102, 168, 226, 402
al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik 287n, 289, 299, 303n
Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsin al-kalim 287n, 288n, 289, 296, 299, 303–307
Mufaḍḍaliyyāt 312
Muslims 3–6, 13, 17, 18, 26, 33, 34, 57, 60, 93, 95–97, 99–104, 107, 116, 122, 123, 127, 134–136, 138, 142, 146, 157–159, 162, 166, 168, 171, 174, 175, 183–186, 188, 191, 192, 195, 198, 202, 204, 205, 208–211, 214–216, 218, 219, 221–223, 225–227, 232, 240, 243, 248, 249, 257–259, 265, 266, 269, 271–273, 275, 278, 279, 284, 287, 299, 302, 303, 310, 311, 315, 317, 318, 320–326, 395, 402, 403, 405, 407, 408, 415, 418, 420, 422
al-Muʿtaṣim 312, 328
Muʿtazila 6, 93n, 165n, 166, 167n, 168, 169, 170n, 171, 215, 216, 218, 219, 221–222, 225, 256n, 338, 343n, 344

Neophytos Enkleistos, St. 245–249
Nestorian Christology 423
Nestorians 5, 10, 157, 171n, 179, 214, 216, 221, 223, 333, 423, 430
Nicholas, St. 416
Nilus of Ancyra 354

omissions 44, 88
omniscience 180, 181
Origen 83, 125, 349, 361, 362
owners (of manuscripts) 357, 358, 353, 368, 371, 373, 376, 379, 382, 387, 391

Pachomius 360, 381, 385–387
pagination 370, 389, 391
Palestine 7, 15, 26, 37, 38, 60, 231–246, 248–250, 399n
Palestinian monasticism 231–237
palimpsests 426, 427
Palladius 381
paradise 97, 138, 139n, 147, 337, 341–343
paraenetics 302, 356
Paris manuscripts 62, 119, 289, 290, 303, 350–352, 355, 356, 358, 359, 409, 410
patrons 273, 357–358, 363
Paul of Antioch 98, 106, 333–344
Pauline epistles 359, 428–429, 433
Peshitta 39, 41–43, 45, 49, 50, 268, 430–433

Peter, apostle 116, 124–125, 138, 141–146, 242, 436, 447, 460–461, 462–463, 474–475
Philoxenos of Mabbug 360, 385, 430
pilgrimage 129, 140n, 143, 231–237, 238n–239n, 246–247, 316
Plato 159–160, 285–286, 421–422
polygamy 401
predestination 301n, 334, 336
priest / priests 67, 73, 121–122, 132, 139, 143, 146–151, 207–208, 265, 354n, 358–359, 379, 382, 406–408, 454–457, 460–467, 472–475
Prime Mover 342
Proverbs, Biblical book 302, 351, 353, 355, 356n, 359, 368, 371, 373, 487
Pseudo-Callisthenes 117n, 296, 365
Pseudo-Methodius 115, 117–119, 123n, 124, 126n

qāḍī 257–260, 271, 277, 322, 324, 331
al-qaḍā' wa-l-qadar (divine predestination) 296, 301, 302
see also predestination
al-Qarāfī, Shihāb al-Dīn 98n, 333
qibla 85, 186, 316
qiṣāṣ (legal retribution) 266, 267n, 270–271, 272n
Question-and-Answer literature (*erotapokriseis*) 397–400
Questions and Answers of Basil and Gregory 395–408
quires 63n, 357, 363, 364, 368–372, 374–377, 379–380, 383–384, 388–389, 391
Qur'ān commentaries (*tafsīr*) 3, 5, 8, 12n, 13, 16–19, 101n–102n, 105n, 107, 195, 315, 340
Qur'ān, Christian use of 3–6, 8–19, 93–107, 146, 183, 184, 278, 333, 339, 417, 418, 422–424

al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn 101n, 105, 343
redundant constructions 51
restorers (of manuscripts) 357, 363
see also owners
patrons
retaliation 270–273, 279
rizq 300–301
Rūm Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch 23–24, 28, 32–33

Saadiah Gaon 61–62, 64–75, 78–80, 82, 84–88
Ṣadaqa ibn Munajjab al-Mutaṭabbib 67, 80, 81
al-Ṣafadī, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl ibn Aybak 313, 322–325
al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt 313n, 322, 323n, 324n
saints 139, 140, 145, 232, 242–244, 249–250, 261, 366, 446, 454–455, 462–463, 470–471, 478–479, 488–489, 492–493
sajʿ 285–286
Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (Saladin) 60, 248–249, 336
salvation 4, 6, 11–12, 16, 94n, 125, 133, 139, 179, 187–190, 192, 194, 239–240, 249, 290, 292, 360, 366, 375, 416, 474–475, 488–489, 490–491
al-Sanā Abū al-Majd Buṭrus ibn al-Muhadhdhib Abū al-Faraj 59
scribes 57, 95, 289, 311, 325, 357–358, 363, 368, 371
Sefer Josippon 60, 61n, 62, 78
al-Shāfiʿī, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs 258n, 260, 272, 275
Shāfiʿī jurisprudence 258n, 260, 272, 275, 322
al-Shanfarā al-Azdī 327
sharing of food / commensality 404
sharing of sacrificial foods 404
Shenoute the Archimandrite, St. 290, 360, 386, 446–447, 485
shift of word order 43, 50
Sidon 52–53, 98, 333, 334n, 335–337
Simeon the Stylite 381
Sinai 25, 38, 52, 233n, 353–354, 398
see also Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai
Sinai New Finds 426–434
slander of Muḥammad's mother 269, 273–276, 279
slave trading 406–407
Smith-Van Dyck Bible 23, 30–31, 34–35
social life 151
Song of Songs 351, 353, 355, 359, 368, 371, 373, 485
soteriology 187, 192
Stephen of the Thebaid 360, 381, 387
Sufi, Sufism 287, 302, 322, 340
suicide 401

al-Ṣūlī 8, 315, 325
Symmachus 83
Synod of 804 (Church of the East) 260–261
Syriac 4–7, 9, 22, 23, 25, 37–45, 47–48, 51, 58, 67, 69, 83, 84, 88, 94, 95, 116–120, 125, 138, 140–141, 159, 174, 179, 267–268, 321, 349, 352–355, 361–362, 377–378, 381, 395, 398–400, 409, 420–421, 424, 426, 430–442

Ta'abbaṭa Sharran 327
al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ja'far 6, 8, 12–18, 102, 103n, 204n, 210n, 258n, 274
al-Ṭabarī, 'Alī ibn Rabbān 214
taḥrīf 78, 157–158
tawḥīd 9, 159, 215, 222, 342
Ṭayyi', tribe 315
Temple 120–121, 124, 137, 149, 186
textual criticism 33, 430n, 433n
Theodore Abū Qurra 10, 97, 100n, 106, 157, 179, 180n, 182, 183n, 184n, 187, 188n, 190, 215
Theodore, disciple of Pachomius 386
Theodore Prodromos 244–245
Theodotion 83
Throne of God 169, 182–185
al-Thu'bān al-Rāhib 59
Timothy I, Catholicos 157, 202, 214, 256, 260–262
Tinnīs 336
al-Tinnīsī, Abū al-Surūr 336, 337
Tobias 365
Torah 45, 60, 65, 67, 78, 122, 186, 202
translations, techniques of 39n, 78–79, 85–86, 429n, 433–444
  strategies of 37–50
  variants in 25, 62, 82–83, 88, 200, 432
  free 39, 41–42, 50
  literal 39–41
  additions to 25, 39, 43–44, 67, 81, 85, 88
  see also Bible, Arabic translations of
Trinity 9, 14, 98, 104, 158, 336, 422

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb 195, 204, 270n, 323
Umayyad-Church of the East relations 214, 257, 262–267

Van Dyck, Cornelius 314
  see also Smith-Van Dyck Bible
Vatican manuscripts 118, 119, 350, 352, 355–356, 358–359, 408–411, 428
Visions of Shenoute 446–447

Wādī al-Naṭrūn 349, 352, 356, 399n
Wāliba ibn Ḥubāb 327
watermarks 358, 364
wisdom 130, 160, 163, 167–168, 170–171, 173, 285, 417, 421
wisdom literature 284, 289, 299, 304
Word of God (Bible) 30
Word of God (Jesus Christ) 419, 422–423
Word of God (Qur'ān) 94, 99, 107, 422

Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī 96n, 158, 221, 314
Yefet ben 'Elī 80
Yeshu'ah ben Judah 80
Yūḥannā al-Fayyūmī 358–359, 363, 368, 373, 376, 379, 382–383

Ẓāhirite 322